CROWDING MEMORIES

MRS. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

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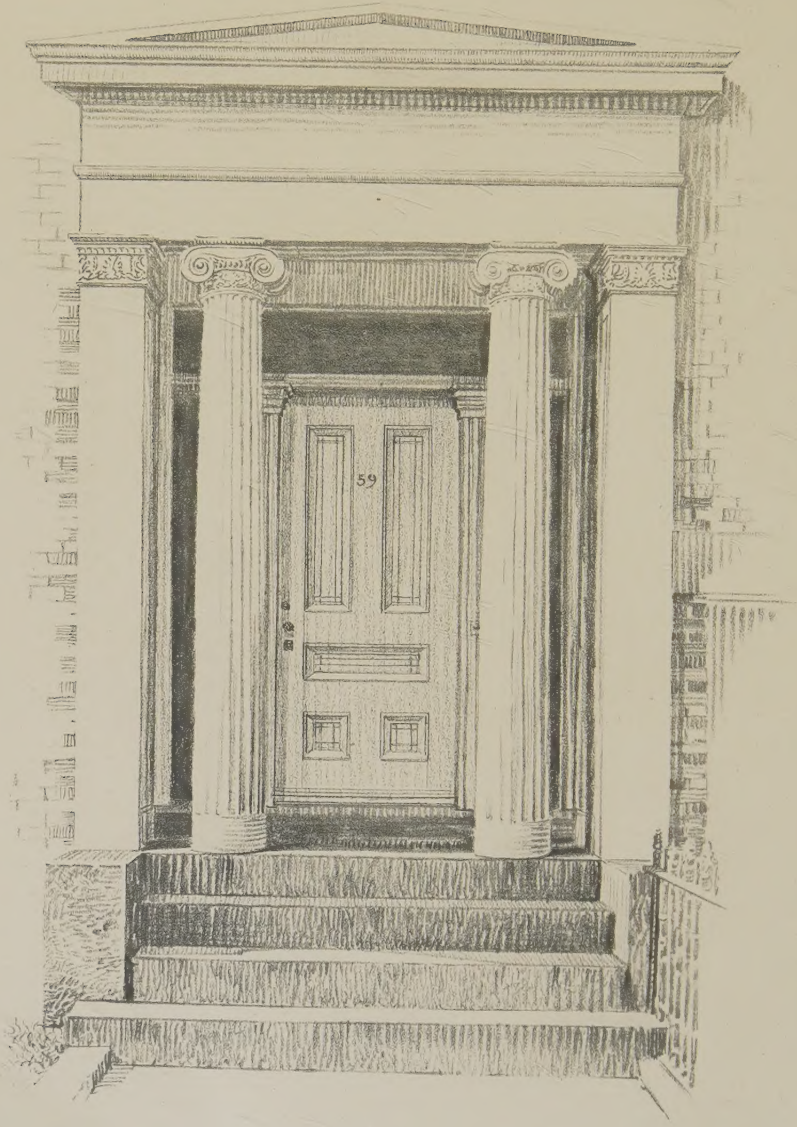
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CROWDING MEMORIES

BY

MRS. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

With Illustrations

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'All, all are gone, the old familiar faces!"

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CROWDING MEMORIES

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CHAPTER I

IN the "Life" of Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Ferris Greenslet writes: "In the late fall of 1862 Mr. Aldrich had met at Mr. Edwin Booth's rooms the woman who was to be his lifelong companion." The circumstance effecting this event, begun two years before, was interesting from the subtle prescience expressed by this young girl, when she, for the first time, saw Mr. Booth on the stage. It was at the end of a summer passed in the White Mountains. The journey from New Hampshire to New York was much more seriously to be considered than would be possible to-day. A break for the night must be made somewhere, so Boston, and the Tremont House, which then was a notable hostelry, was selected. On the arrival in that city an invitation was received for the theatre that evening to see a young actor, who was playing to enthusiastic audiences and winning fresh laurels — the son of a great actor, Junius Brutus Booth. The youthful one of the family was very reluctant to have the invitation accepted, and shamelessly confessed that she could not be

tempted to sit through "Hamlet" — that she did n't care for Shakespeare anyway. But being in the minority, and as she could not be left at the hotel alone, with outward depression and inward rage she found herself seated at the theatre, so near the front that the orchestra was all that separated her from the Court of Denmark. Lost in wonder and amazement at the power of the playwright and the wonderful magic and magnetism of the actor, lost to the actual world, and living only in the life beyond the green curtain, she sat spell-bound through the eventful evening. After the return to the hotel she said to her sister: "The turning-point has come to my life. That young actor will control my destiny." Asked how that could be, as her family had never known any person connected with the stage, she answered with still greater certainty: "I do not know the way, but it will be."

Some weeks after this episode, her family having taken an apartment in one of the hotels in New York, the housekeeper superintending the arrangement of the rooms lingered a moment to say: "You will have pleasant neighbors. A young actor and his bride, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Booth, are on this corridor. They were married a month or two ago." Thus the "destiny that shapes our ends" was making real the premonition so earnestly believed.

Weeks succeeded weeks and nothing was seen of

Mr. Booth and his young bride. Sometimes in passing one caught sight of a cosy round table set for two; well-filled bookcases and the glimmer of firelight on the picture frames. Once the door opened and gave a picture now indelible in memory: a blazing fire, a huge black bearskin rug, a cushion, an open book, and by it a guitar. As the door closed, the listener waiting heard the soft music of its strings, and a sweet girlish voice, giving fresh grace to the old-time song, "Come live with me and be my love."

For the daughters of the house life was not so strenuous in the sixties as in the present time. There were lessons and masters, to be sure, and plenty of them, but there was also plenty of time to play. And of this time the younger daughter had taken undue advantage. On a day that was to be ever afterwards marked with a white stone, she had been late to luncheon, and the law was inflexible that under no circumstances would it be permissible to go to the public dining-room unattended. But she was hungry, and with premeditation determined to disobey; and so with stealthy steps found her way into "the little dining-room," where a surprised waiter gave her a seat at a small table. Perplexed over the composition of an excuse that would not go to pieces with the cross-questionings of her judge in relation to her disinclination to luncheon that day, she did not

notice that any one had entered the room until two chairs were placed at her table and two guests were given them. The unbelievable had happened — the Prince and his Princess sat at her table! She could have touched them! For a moment everything seemed unreal — the vagary of a dream — except the definite thought, if she raised her eyes the forms would take incorporeal shape and steal away, like the ghost of Hamlet's father. Companioned with this thought was the unhappy knowledge that should they prove real and in the flesh, she herself must soon steal away, for they would know that nothing came after ice-cream, and she was lacking the magic wand to turn it backwards into soup.

It is most difficult to give any idea of Mr. Booth's personality at this time. His fine bearing and natural grace, the magic charm of face and figure, the melodious voice and the ever-changing expression of his eyes! The one who was to be loved the most sat by him. Slight in figure, but with lovely lines; honest, straightforward eyes, brown and tender; years that counted nineteen; an ineffable grace that made even strangers love her.

Mr. and Mrs. Booth "chatted of this and that, the nothings that make up life," until suddenly the quiet of the table was broken in upon by the mad rush of a greyhound, who had slipped the leash from the hand that held him, and with inexhaustible joy

found his mistress. Tragedy also entered with the coming of the valet, who inadvertently had allowed this disturber of the peace to gain his freedom. There was a lurid flash of the tragedian's eyes, a lightning glare of baleful wrath, and then valet and dog escaped together. With the protection of footlights nothing daunted the indomitable heart of Armand Richelieu; but in front of the footlights no girl was ever more shy or shrank more from observation. For the other two, however, the silence was broken. The dog in his chaotic career had not admitted an obstacle on his way to his mistress, who with pretty words asked forgiveness for the culprit. The freemasonry of youth soon put the two at ease, and made the talk so friendly that when the melted ice-cream could no longer be made the excuse to stay, they parted, each expressing the hope of meeting soon again — but Mr. Booth sat silent and aloof.

This meeting — so momentous for one in its results — was accidental for all. The casual chance of a prolonged rehearsal — it was the first and only time that the Booths came to "the little dining-room" that winter.

> "We are puppets, man in his pride,
> And Beauty fair in her flower.
> Do we move ourselves on the board,
> Or are moved by an unseen Power?"

How vividly memory brings to mind a bitter

winter night — a night of sleet and snow and howling winds! The coming of a note that read, "May the culprit and his mistress call on his young friend?"

The years recede and again I see, framed in an open door, a slender girl in a soft red dress which fell in simple folds about her feet. The refracting light striking and vivifying her lover's gift, a perfect chrysolite, holding the lace at her throat.

"If Heaven would make me such another world, of one entire and perfect chrysolite, I'd not have sold her for it."

This evening was for one the Open Sesame of idyllic days, full of romance and mystery. Mr. Booth, then twenty-seven years old, was in the height of his splendor. The early part of his life had much of hardship and vicissitude, which with an inherited temperament had stamped his pale and mobile face with a deep expression of melancholy. The strange magnetic quality of his nature was almost perceptible to the touch. No one could come into his presence without, consciously or unconsciously, coming under his influence. He inspired an admiration that no word can adequately describe. When he walked the streets people stopped to gaze at him. When he played, the stage door on the street was blocked with both men and women who waited for one more glimpse of him as he stepped to his

carriage. Of this luminous atmosphere in which he walked he seemed unconscious; or brushed it aside as something disconnected with himself, belonging solely to the trappings and paraphernalia of the stage. Never then, or in the years that followed, was the personal note heard, excepting one night, so well remembered, when in the darkness of a stage box an apparition came: Hamlet in his sable weeds, and as glad to see his young, ardent friends as if he had not himself ensconced them an hour before in their curtained nest. The joy of meeting was so loudly expressed by him that the caution came, "Edwin, Edwin, not so loud, they'll hear you speak!" With a light kiss on the uplifted face the gay and laughing voice rang out, "Why, they paid their money to hear me speak — and speak I will!"

It was not decreed that Mr. Booth in his life of gloom and glory should know much of happiness. Doubtless this first year of the honeymoon of marriage brought him nearer to it than he had ever been before. No hermit in his cell, or nun in her cloister, was more secluded from the world than this happy pair. Daily on their table were laid letters, cards, notes of invitation — all read and courteously declined. They went nowhere, saw no one, save the two young girls with whom the new and ardent friendship was to live through distant years, warm and vital to the end.

The coming of each day brought little change. A morning walk to rehearsal, a drive perhaps in the afternoon, a *partie carreé* for dinner, with the enchanting talk, the extraordinary activity of Mr. Booth's keen intellect, and the playful humor when he was in the vein of story-telling.

Never to be forgotten is his impersonation of three miserably unhappy puppies, hanging in a basket at night over a berth in a Pullman car. He gave himself the characteristics of each separate dog, with his head over the basket, voicing its distress and discontent over the situation, baying to the moon.

After the dinner there would be the chat round the fire, the Prince lying on the black bearskin rug, face downward, supported by his elbows, going over the play for the evening, Mrs. Booth giving him his cues; then the rapid drive to the theatre, arriving long before the audience came in order that Mr. Booth might have time for his make-up. He always went with us to the box — always came there for us at the end of the play.

In retrospection I know the spur for his best was not the crowded house with its loud acclamation, the shouts and wild applause. The play for him was all for that sweet girl-wife, who from behind the curtains, shut from his sight, followed word for word his lines. Once, clenching her slender hand,

she exclaimed, "Oh, I have made a mistake — said the wrong line, and Edwin is saying it!" So subtle and close was the tie between them.

The only social event remembered of which they were a part this winter was something with a Shakespearean touch at the Century Club. Mr. Booth accepted the invitation with the greater reluctance as it obliged him to wear evening dress, in which he was always ill at ease. He confided to his listener that in that environment he was so conscious of his legs that they became to him impertinently intrusive and prominent.

When the dreaded evening came, and the two unwilling guests were clothed for the sacrifice, Mrs. Booth looking like a violet itself in her purple dress, lighted by the fire of her opals, Mr. Booth said: "Now every man, woman, and child I meet will say the thing they always say, 'Mr. Booth, do you believe Hamlet was really insane, or did he think it meet to put an antic disposition on?'" With this, and making his wonderful eyes convey with electrical effect the awful frenzy in the storm scene in "King Lear," they vanished.

With one more incident of this archaic life the historian must turn the leaves, and set her stage for later days and other players. One morning the word came that, for some now forgotten reason, there would be no performance at the theatre that

night. This gave the opportunity Mr. Booth eagerly wished for — the chance for a flying trip to Philadelphia to see his mother, to whom he was strongly devoted. This would mean the first separation of the lovers, and the looker-on marvelled that the flower-like face of the girl wife was without even the shadow of gloom, and the voice insistent that the visit must be made. When the sweet sorrow of parting was over the explanation came. Hamlet was to have a great surprise, a new dress — and we were to make it!

The party of three threw themselves into this daring exploit with all the enthusiasm of ignorant youth, and with so little experience of the difficulties that might beset them in the undertaking that, had the proposition been to costume the entire company in twelve hours, they gladly would have accepted it. Yardsticks and measures were at once brought out, and severe mathematical computations made as to the number of yards necessary to compass a gown. A messenger was sent to the theatre for Hamlet's robes; a message to the shop for velvet; and soon with flushed cheeks and impatient hands the work went bravely on, and the Prince's discarded inky coat fell to the floor in as many pieces as Joseph's colored one. In the excitement of ripping the garment the problem of putting together again had not been considered,

and although all pieces were carefully duplicated, they were without form and void in coming together again. No picture puzzle was ever so puzzling. There were hours of heroic effort spent, followed by black despair. When Mr. Booth returned next day he had his surprise, indeed, but not the one counted on. Three wan figures sitting on the floor, in their dark house of cloud, disconsolate; his mourning suit in ruin at their feet, and Hamlet to be played that night! After his first moment of consternation, his tenderness and playful humor brought balm to the sorrowful hearts. There was given much praise and gratitude for the good intentions, and tactful sympathy for the failure. There were hurried calls to the theatre for wardrobe women and seamstresses, and in their masterful hands pieces went easily together, and the inky coat was worn in triumph that night.

The spring came and brought with it the most advantageous offer of a London engagement. The offer was accepted, and we sadly waved our last adieus as their steamer moved slowly outward bound. We all knew the idyl was over — the leaf was turned.

"There are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain,
But when youth the dream departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again."

CHAPTER II

THE charmed life of the memorable winter had made it difficult to feel the same interest in the old routine. Romance had fled, and it was an every-day world again. The letters from London had an undertone of sadness. One felt that in some indefinable way the going was not wholly a success. A few months later the cable flashed the happy news, "Thank God, all is well! A daughter!" From this time a more cheerful note pervades the letters, and there is much of little Edwina and her French nurse, interspersed with graphic descriptions of a dinner or a tea, and the celebrities met.

At last, after a year's absence, the message, so impatiently hoped for, came — the date of the home-coming. There is an undimmed picture in my memory of the Prince and his sweet wife at the hour of their arrival to the same environment of the year before. How like, and yet how unlike, they looked. A certain pose of sophistication had come to both. They seemed more remote from the magic air, the fields Elysian. Before there had been time to realize the fact that they were actually at home again a card was handed to Mr. Booth. He read it aloud: "Mr. and Mrs. Richard Henry Stoddard."

The surprise to the listener was unprecedented when Mr. Booth said, "Ask them to come up." Then to the questioning interrogation of a face he said, "They are strangers to us, but close friends to Lorimer Graham, and through his correspondence we have also corresponded."

A knock sounded on the door, and in answer to the deep-toned enunciation of "Enter," Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard came in, bringing with them, unseen by all, the connecting link which was to verify the premonition felt by this young girl on first seeing Mr. Booth upon the stage two years before.

Every detail of that hour is very distinct. The opening door; on its threshold a woman of angular slimness, perhaps forty-three or forty-four years old. She wore a dull brown dress, with an arabesque of white in minute pattern woven through the warp. The expression of face and figure was withered like a brown leaf left on the tree before the snow comes. No aura of charm whatever. There was a moment of silence; then Mr. Booth with outstretched arms moved quickly toward her, and in his hands her hands were laid. There were but two words spoken, "Edwin," "Elizabeth." Then Mr. Booth, releasing her hand, slowly untied the strings of the bonnet that shaded her face, took it off, and still holding it in his hand drew her to a chair.

After the incident of this dramatic meeting, when

Mr. Stoddard had found his way to Mrs. Booth and was speaking to her in lowered tones, the two witnesses of this strange scene felt for the moment *de trop*. But the feeling was followed a minute later by the certainty that they were not *de trop*, but non-existent. The door being open, wordless and with wonder they passed from this electrical atmosphere into saner air.

I know no prototype of Mrs. Stoddard — this singular woman, who possessed so strongly the ability to sway all men who came within her influence. Brilliant and fascinating, she needed neither beauty nor youth, her power was so much beyond such aids. On every variety of subject she talked with originality and ready wit; with impassioned speech expressing an individuality and insight most unusual and rare. A few days after this first meeting Mr. and Mrs. Booth were invited to the Stoddards' to meet their circle of literary and artistic friends.

The Stoddards were living at that time in a house on Tenth Street where they had been for many years, occupying rooms up one flight on the corner of Fourth Avenue. Such a boarding-house as Miss Swift's was possible in the early sixties, and as impossible in these later days. It was said that there were three literary centres in New York at this time: this unique house in Tenth Street; the Bo-

hemian circle that used to frequent Pfaff's beer cellar in Broadway; the third was the Century Club — but there it was not all cakes and ale. It was rather a solemn thing to belong to it. The new member entered its (to him) inhospitable door with somewhat the same feelings that would have represented his complex mind had it been the portal of a church. The châtelaine of the Tenth Street house was an exceptional and interesting character. Her criticisms and discussion of current matters were admirable. She would rather run the risk of losing a boarder than forego the privilege of speaking her mind freely in regard to every issue of the day. She had also a keen sense of humor, and dearly loved a joke, bringing to it a laugh that was most contagious.

Among the heterogeneous company of men and women that assembled daily at her table she numbered authors, actors, artists, musicians, mathematicians, professors, journalists, critics, and essayists. To Mrs. Stoddard alone, however, was the honor given of a salon. An invitation to her rooms on the evening she entertained was to this company what a ribbon is to a soldier, and prized accordingly.

It was to this salon that Mr. and Mrs. Booth were bidden. The tremulous excitement of the first meeting with the Stoddards had not yet passed. And for the guests of the caravansary in Tenth

Street the desire was great to see the Prince of players, who hitherto had been as inaccessible to sight and touch as if he wore the iron mask.

To the two who were not invited to the feast sadly came the recognition that there would be no dressing the bride on this occasion. A French dress and a French maid would give the touches which before they had delighted in. No confidences would be exchanged as to the evil tendencies of unprotected limbs in evening suits. The impalpable barrier of convention had intervened and changed their world.

The next morning a sleepy eye opening to the light of day discovered a bit of white paper that had been slipped under the door, and which read something in this wise: "It is long after midnight; you are asleep; no light showing over the transom, and no heed to the slight knock at your door. Wake early, and come to breakfast with us at ten, that we may tell you of the delightful hours of last evening. Good-night to you, dears, from Edwin in his cap and Mary in her kerchief."

Recollections long unstirred give back the day and hour, and show again the same room of the year before. From the walls hang the wonderful living picture of life and death: the students and the master — Rembrandt's "Anatomy," looked down upon us. In the shadow of the heavy curtain

at the window we see the picture with the mourning drapery covering, and half concealing, the casket of King Charles. The breakfast table this time is set for four; the sunlight touching and retouching its bit of silver and glass, deepening the color of the Prince's velvet coat. The bearskin rug still has its place in front of the open fire. But in place of guitar, cushion, and book, it is a monarch's throne. A sovereign reigns who is empress of all; her minister of state a *bonne* in her cap. Her retinue woolly cats without tails, dogs without ears, and an army of Noah's ark's wonderful things half hidden in the long black fur.

With the coffee came the pleasant chat; the word-portraits, drawn with such mastery of perception that the men and women of the night before became visual and breakfasted with us. First for guests we had Mr. Bayard Taylor and his young German bride, wearing the simple black dress of the German *frau;* the lace cap, the insignia of the new dignity of wifehood, covering her sunny hair. Bayard's "picture in little" was of a big, genial, lovable man, an immense favorite with all, full of good-fellowship, and bubbling over with gaiety and cheer. Next came Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, argumentative, alert, debonair. Mrs. Stedman was sketched in black and white, neutral and colorless. Stoddard, a poet and essayist. Mrs. Stoddard too

scintillating to be drawn. Then followed the "mob of gentlemen and gentlewomen who wrote with care." After them, Fitz Hugh Ludlow, a writer of good stories, and a smoker of hasheesh — seeing visions. Mrs. Ludlow's picture had a charm all its own of youth and beauty; brown hair, brown eyes, slight figure, tartan plaid dress — greens and blues in happy mixture, with a final touch of the blue snood that bound her hair, with just a curl or two escaping. Launt Thompson, a sculptor — Mr. Aldrich, a poet — At this point the speaker was suddenly interrupted — a voice broke in, "Do you mean the poet, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who wrote the beautiful 'Ballad of Babie Bell'? Wait. I think I could almost paint Mr. Aldrich's portrait myself. I know his poems so well that the outward semblance of the man takes shape, visual and vitalizing — Mr. Aldrich must be a man about thirty-five years old, tall, slender, with black hair, piercing eye, pallid face stamped with melancholy, which grief for the death of that child and its mother must have indelibly written there — you both must remember in their beauty and pathos the last lines of that poem:

> "'We wove the roses round her brow —
> White buds, the summer's drifted snow, —
> Wrapt her from head to foot in flowers . . .
> And thus went dainty Baby Bell
> Out of this world of ours!'

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH AT NINETEEN

"And in the beginning of that wonderful poem, Mr. Aldrich tells us —

"'The mother's being ceased on earth
When Baby came from Paradise.'"

At this point the young improvisatrice was interrupted by a strange gurgling, bubbling noise that sounded very like suppressed mirth. There was silence for a minute, and then, to the astonishment and dismay of the vivid portrait-painter, hysterical laughter, which would leave off for a moment only to begin anew. Finally the Prince found voice to say: "In poetry, and in play acting, nothing is, but what is not. Tom Aldrich does not look twenty; he is short and blond and gay and brilliant; never had a wife, never had a child; never had anything, I guess, but the Muses, and poetical license."

Soon after this idealistic episode of mistaken identity, the habitués of Mrs. Stoddard's salon were invited to the Booths' for an evening; and to the two young friends was given the pleasant task of assisting Mrs. Booth in receiving the distinguished guests. It would be useless to describe the tumult of excitement this invitation brought. To gaze from afar on the celestial beings who wrote books had been their highest aspiration. But to touch the hand that had penned words that burn was beyond all imagining.

New York at this time was in the throes of the Civil War. The city a mass of national colors; flags waving, battle-cries sounding from every pulpit; patriotism rampant; the gold lace of a soldier dear to every young woman's heart. If, unfortunately, she was without brother or lover to send to the front, her scraping of linen or rolling of bandages did not count among her compatriots. She had nothing to give to her country. The night before the culmination of this wonderful party, to the younger of Mrs. Booth's friends, a telegram was given; it read: "Unexpected leave. Am coming for the day" — the signer of the telegram a colonel in the army, half her lover, and all her friend.

For Mrs. Booth's young friend the following day was so filled with stories of "battles, sieges, fortunes," the hours passed with such rapidity, that the evening was half over before she awoke to the consciousness of her new duties in the world of poets and scholars. There had been a visit made, and a walk back in the moonlight. The toilet that with girlish delight had been thought over and planned could not now be made. Nor was there time for broad, intricate braids of blonde hair. The fair hair had been parted, drawn close to the face to fit well with the poke bonnet, whose azure silk lining and feathers contrasted prettily with the long velvet cloak and elephant-colored dress she wore. The bon-

net with its becoming light blue feathers was hastily taken off; the velvet cloak slipped from her shoulders, and she stood revealed — a slim, blonde girl in mouse-colored dress, with nothing bright about her save her hair. There was a hurried rush through the hall, a quick-beating heart, a pause for breath and courage, the door slowly opened and she passed to a new world — the world of letters.

How well memory reproduces that scene; the gaiety, the laughter, the hazy atmosphere — for the men were smoking; a rap on the table for attention; a funny story told; the chaff, the repartee. A group of two sitting in the shadow of the curtain's fold seemed so young and happy. They needed "no guest to come between. They needs must be each other's own best company." The shy one, who was vainly trying to talk theism with a graybeard, wished she might go over and join them. Just then the seneschal passed. There was a little tug at his coat and the whisper, "Show me Aldrich, please." The laughing answer came, "I mount, I fly!" And, unheedful of remonstrance, flew. There were inattentive ears for theism, and eager eyes for the seneschal making his way through groups of friends, until he stopped and stood before the happy pair. Mr. Aldrich rose, and with unequivocal reluctance followed his host to where the mouse-colored girl awaited his coming.

There was no doubtful expression in the way his eyes returned to his one-time neighbor. There was no doubtful expression in the half-hearted way he tried to talk with the wordless being beside him. It was so palpable that he did not want to come; it was so obvious that he did want to go. Once or twice he spoke across the room to Mrs. Ludlow, for that was the Dulcinea who had entangled him in the meshes of her brown hair. The wordless one sat silent, with mixed emotions: amusement, surprise, disappointment — for there had been knights who wore her gages. The subtle affinity of affection soon sent a message to Mr. Aldrich's chum to come to the rescue, and in answer to it, Mr. Launt Thompson appeared, and with the introduction and the words, "Take my chair, Launt," Mr. Aldrich bowed to both and leisurely sauntered away.

Supper was served at a very long table, gay with flowers and lighted with huge candelabra. It was a new experience to see Mr. Booth as a host at such a gathering. Mrs. Stoddard sat at his right hand. There was much clinking of glasses, stories, and drinking of healths; but Mr. Booth's glass stood empty through the evening.

At the end of the dinner Mr. Bierstadt, who at that time was probably the most talked-of artist in New York, rose, and after asking the guests to drink once more the health of host and hostess, in-

vited the entire company there assembled to honor him with their presence at his studio a fortnight from that date. In making the adieus Mr. Bierstadt said to Mrs. Booth, "Do not fail to bring with you to the studio your two young friends."

Of the intervening fortnight there are vague and confused memories of small teas at the Stoddards' and the Booths'; calls exchanged, and evenings passed at the theatre; the three no longer hidden by the curtains, but with lights turned up, and frequent visitors to the box. My memory recalls with great distinctness the coming of Mr. Parke Godwin, the son-in-law of Mr. Bryant, then editing one of the leading papers of New York. There were times when Mr. Godwin was lacking in manner and manners. When wholly absorbed in a subject that interested him, he took no responsibility whatever for a large body that often assumed questionable shapes, as on this occasion, when he allowed his weary limbs to rest on the seat of a vacant chair in the most conspicuous part of the box. The fertile and futile attempts that were made to have the evening wraps accidentally fall and cover them, and the unconscious way in which he, finding them too heavy or too warm, would remove them and continue with his theme! The relief when the green curtain went up and the lights were lowered, and the chair with its unwelcome guests was invisible!

When the Bierstadt evening came and there was a *toilette à faire*, the blonde braids were broad and intricate; the white lace fichu was held by a *bouquet de corsage* of violets and white flowers. The blue of the dress matched the color of the eyes. When the studio door opened and the little party came in, Mr. Aldrich's look of quick surprise was not without a certain triumph to one whose ears had so lately been attuned to the refrain of the old melody, "Phillada flouts me, flouts me." On this evening Mrs. Ludlow was without her cavalier.

Mr. Greenslet in his "Life" of Mr. Aldrich visualizes him as he was at this time with such accuracy that the words become as a glass in which he stands reflected:

"Let him be in our minds, an alert, slender young man, with clear, steady gray-blue eyes, and crisp golden hair; let us imagine his witty, winsome manner with its slight distinguishing touch of Parnassian dignity, and we shall be tolerably acquainted with the 'lovely fellow' of his friends' recollection."

CHAPTER III

IN the kaleidoscope of brilliant lights and colors that focus in memory of the weeks that followed the evening in Mr. Bierstadt's studio are the nights at the theatre, and the charming men and women that came as guests to Mrs. Booth's box, Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Launt Thompson being very frequent ones.

After the play there would again be the little suppers in Mr. Booth's rooms; sometimes other friends, but more often the same *partie carrée* as of old; but now we "wear our rue with a difference." The Prince's glass no longer stands empty by his plate. The enemy that men put into their mouths to steal away their brains had found a vulnerable place in his armor; the strong armor that Love had forged in the blaze of divine fire. With the invisible spirit of wine another unbidden guest lurked in the shadows — a messenger awaiting the faultless one, who soon was to give her young life to save what was dearer than life.

During this engagement of Mr. Booth's New York was seething in the indescribable excitement of the war. There were fewer theatres then than now, and those were crowded with men and women

anxious to forget in the mimic world the realities of the actual one in which they lived. Unfortunately, a previous engagement had been made for Mr. Booth for a short season in Boston, so the green curtain must be rung down, and the crowded and brilliant audience that nightly had sat enthralled by the masterly rendering of Shakespeare's verse was disbanded.

For the last days before the flitting there linger vague memories of detached scenes and hours. One scene must remain, however, always distinct and perfect. The quick rap, rap, of Mr. Booth at the door, and the breezy entrance of the happy pair, the Princess's face radiant with joy. In her hand she held her lover's gift, a beautifully painted miniature of himself. Her delight in her new possession was so deep that her words tumbled in expressing it. With a light laugh at her incoherence she drew his face close to her lips, and softly came the murmur of Othello's words, "O, my sweet, I prattle out of fashion, and I dote in my own comfort."

Then the picture changes, and at the piano sits the lithe figure of a girl in a dull green dress, her only ornament a beryl brooch. From under her pliant fingers the exultant music of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" fills the room, and then sudden silence as she turns and says: "When Death takes you, my best beloved, nothing will be more my solace than

this last gift. I shall wear it eternally upon my heart." To the question asked: "Why do you always think and speak of Mr. Booth as being the one to go?" quickly the answer came: "Death could not be so cruel as to take me from him. He needs me — he needs me so!" And then, close in his arms, through tears, her fervent prayer: "Almighty God, Merciful Father, for Jesus' sake spare him the cross! Take him first, I do beseech Thee!"

It was a gray and ominous morning the day of the departure for Boston. The depression of the weather seemed almost contagious to the four who shared its gloom. At the last moment, Marie, the French nurse, had without permission fled to confession at a neighboring church, leaving her charge in her crib, undressed and asleep. When the carriage for the station was announced, and the baby sent for, there was a darkened room, a sleeping child, and apparently no preparation for a journey. There was no time for inaction; the baby was hurried up, wrapped in its crib blankets, its clothes crowded into a bag, and as the carriage door closed, Marie was seen running toward it, her sins, let us hope, shrived and forgiven.

Although this visit to Boston was expected to be but two weeks in duration, there were neither sunshine nor smiles in the adieus. Sadly we waved our kisses as the carriage moved slowly away, sadly were they returned. Far from our thoughts was the

knowledge that, for us, it was the last look upon the face that had grown so dear.

Before the allotted two weeks passed a letter came from Mrs. Booth bearing sad tidings, with the request that their Lares and Penates should be packed, and their rooms of happy memories dismantled. The doctor had ordered for her a life more free from excitement. A house had been taken in the country near to Boston, and there, with the exception of an engagement of six weeks in New York, would be their home for an indefinite stay. The letter was sad, and between the lines one read that all was not well, and could but love more the wise and tender heart, who, with fine tact, and in so natural a way, had safeguarded and kept as much as possible from temptation the lovely nature given to her care; who conquered daily more than a city in conquering an inherited tendency that burnt in his blood with fever heat. He had said once, when haggard and pale he walked the room: "Since daylight I have not slept. No one can imagine the call of that desire. When it engulfs me, I could sell my soul, my hope of salvation, for just one glass." Strong Love held him — Love glorified was to be his savior.

After the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Booth there were occasional invitations to tea at the Stoddards', and occasional meetings of the new artistic and literary friends. An idolized brother of Mrs. Stod-

dard, Major Wilson Barstow, on the staff of General Dix, wounded, and home on sick-leave, was much in evidence. Gold lace and brass buttons in the sixties took precedence over civilian suits. Mr. Aldrich also came frequently. He was at that time doing editorial work on the "Illustrated News." There is a momentary picture of him, describing to his hostess the tribulation and dismay of a helpless editor when the proprietor of his journal comes to him with a foot-rule in his hand, and demands an editorial of seven inches and three quarters — no more nor less — as he has measured the space on a blank sheet of paper and thinks the proportion looks well! Years later, another proprietor — this time a titled one of London — wrote, asking a contribution for his journal, a sonnet preferred, not to exceed a page, or a page and a half!

The six weeks' engagement of Mr. Booth was to begin in New York on February 9, 1863. The days so eagerly counted that intervened were now few, and when those had passed and the new day come, all the rosebuds should be gathered. For this engagement Mr. Booth had taken an apartment near the theatre, and almost at the moment when their young friends were planning what flowers and fruit should be there to welcome the arrival, a letter came with the Boston postmark, bringing, before the seal was broken, a foreboding of disappointment. The

letter was from Mrs. Booth. In some way she had strained a tendon. The doctor and Mr. Booth so urgently insisted the need of absolute rest for it, that at last she had yielded, and Mr. Booth would come without her for the first weeks. Then followed the despairing moan: "I send him to you. Oh, take care of him, take care of him, for my sake!" Then they knew.

Close as the friendship was, there had always been reticence upon one subject. Never but once or twice at the most had it been spoken of between them. The few times the condition was so obvious that it could not be gainsaid, his sweet defender, his "fair warrior," said, "Alas, Mr. Booth is not well to-day." Once she spoke of the pathetic repentance that always followed; his abasement at her feet for his broken vows; his prayer for forgiveness. Soon after the letter Mr. Booth came. He brought for his young friends tickets for all the performances of the week; but the box, which had become almost a "possessive case," was given to Mrs. Stoddard.

In Mr. Booth's manner there was a nervous excitement — an expression in the eye unstable and flitting. In a strange way he seemed as if he stood in a world, companionless, the invisible supports of life withdrawn. He touched in that week in his acting, all the gamut — the scale of good, bad, indifferent, magnificent. But, with however little interest

he played his part, there was always, as Mr. Clapp recalls with delight, the purity of his enunciation, the elegant correctness of his pronunciation — his absolute mastery of the music and meaning of Shakespeare's verse.

Through the week there had been vague and startling rumors, half suppressed; but not until the beginning of the next week did they take definite form. When Mr. Booth was not at the theatre he could always be found at Mrs. Stoddard's rooms on Tenth Street. Many were the councils held there, *sub rosa*, as to the mode of procedure that could protect him. The protection to be done with so much tact, and in such a natural way, that the protected would feel it accidental. For, notwithstanding the sweetness and simplicity of Mr. Booth's nature, he carried always about him "the divinity that doth hedge a king."

Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Thompson were the two knights that threw the glove and entered the field; their code to be: inseparable companionship; never two, always one. Curious and devious were the ways devised to elude this unwelcome chaperonage — for Mr. Booth found himself helpless in a net that was woven so closely with affectionate words, the joy of his companionship so great, that his knight brooked no separation either day or night. Only once for a moment was the mask lifted. Mr. Aldrich was on

duty in the dressing-room; his host full of suggestions of tempting and pleasant things in front of the footlights; the unbidden guest loudly protesting his greater pleasure in the present companionship of his valued friend. At this point the true inwardness of Mr. Booth's desire to be alone appeared with a messenger boy, who brought on a tray a suspicious-looking beverage. Mr. Booth, with a furtive look toward his *chargé d'affaires*, advanced toward the tempter; but before his hand touched it a swifter hand had taken it; the two men looked at each other, and subterfuge was over. Mr. Aldrich went to the window and emptied the glass. Neither spoke, nor was the incident ever alluded to between them. Through the remainder of that evening, excepting the necessary directions to the dresser, all was silence. Mr. Aldrich went with him to the wings, and waited there for him until his part was over. When the play was finished, in the same unbroken silence the squire and his knight left the theatre together. The squire with rapid gait selected the point of compass that would lead farthest from home. There followed almost exactly the sequence of events that had been enacted years before, when Edwin Booth was a lad and was given the arduous task of watching and caring for the health and safety of his eccentric father. Sleepless nights and lonely days were not the proper lot of boyhood.

In the life of the elder Booth, Mrs. Clarke says that in Louisville, after the night's performance, Mr. Booth started for home; but moved by a sudden impulse he changed his mind, preferring to walk the streets alone. In vain Edwin tried to persuade him to go to a hotel and rest. Mr. Booth, finding that his son would not leave him, darted off in a contrary direction, and walked rapidly until he came to a long covered market, which he entered, and began pacing up and down from one end of the place to the other. Their walk was kept up without pause until daylight. Edwin soon became exhausted with fatigue, but his father, seemingly untired, would at times slacken his pace abruptly, then start off with increasing rapidity; Edwin falling in with his gait as it changed, sometimes angry, and again ready to laugh at the ludicrousness of the situation. Not a syllable had been spoken by either when the elder pedestrian was at last silently impelled to go home to his bed.

At this later day, when almost the same history repeated itself, it was not until the daylight came that Hamlet retraced his steps toward the hotel, where Mr. Aldrich, still in unbroken silence, shared with him the "royal couch of Denmark."

The next morning "Richard was himself again." No surprise shown at the presence of his unbidden guest — no allusion made to the night before.

CHAPTER IV

ON the second day of this last week, over which the clouds were lowering with deepest gloom, the little band of conspirators met again in the Stoddards' rooms, where they were unexpectedly joined by John Wilkes Booth; young, handsome, gay, full of the joy of life; no tragedy there; visibly embodying the line, "My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne." He had just arrived from Boston. He said that two days before he left, Mrs. Booth had suggested that, as she would be alone again, she should go to the city and ask a friend to return with her.

There had been a snowstorm, a delay in the horse-car, and standing on the snow she had waited for it and taken cold. On her return to the house she said to the maid: "Take me upstairs and put me to bed. I feel as if I should never be warm again." In some untranslatable way over the invisible wires the call was heard. After her death Mr. Booth in a letter to Captain Badeau writes: "I lay awake and I distinctly heard these words, 'Come to me, darling, I'm almost frozen!' as plainly as I hear this pen scratching over the paper. It made a strong impression on me, the voice was so sad and imploring."

In the night Mrs. Booth wakened in very great pain, and for two days suffered intensely. The letter, however, brought from her was reassuring. She said the crisis was passed, that Mr. Booth must have no uneasiness, that all she needed was freedom from pain, and rest, and on no account must his engagement be interrupted by her illness.

The following night Mr. Booth eluded his watcher. The situation became so serious that the next day Mrs. Stoddard wrote to Mrs. Booth:

"Sick or well, you must come. Mr. Booth has lost all restraint and hold on himself. Last night there was the grave question of ringing down the curtain before the performance was half over. Lose no time. Come."

What a sad picture the mind portrays of the coming of that letter. The sick-room; held up in the nurse's arms the pale and fragile form, the trembling hand that writes with wavering lines the pathetic words:

"I cannot come. I cannot stand. I think sometimes that only a great calamity can save my dear husband. I am going to try and write to him now, and God give me grace to write as a true wife should."

When all was over, Mr. Booth found Mrs. Stoddard's cruel letter. It was never forgiven; and with the finding the ties of past friendship broke.

The evening after the writing of the letter Mrs. Booth's illness assumed so serious a form that another physician was hastily summoned for consultation. His verdict was: "Too late. The end is near." Mrs. Booth had asked the result and was gently told the truth. Accepting it with quiet submission, she only asked that they would try to hold the spirit until Edwin came, that the lips he loved might be the ones to tell him the tragic fate that had befallen and help him bear the appointed sorrow.

All through that night she watched and waited, holding with her will her spirit's flight until the daylight came. Then she rendered back to God her faultless spirit.

On this sombre night, when happiness died for Mr. Booth, he was playing fitfully, and only half himself; his dressing-table covered with telegrams, notes, letters, souvenirs — valuable and otherwise. Sometimes the letters were read, but more often swept into the waste-basket with seals unbroken. Never was there an actor who had such an extravagant following of adulation — never one to whom, apparently, it was so indifferent.

Late in the evening another telegram was brought to the theatre, and with its unbroken seal laid with the others that had preceded it. When the play was over, and Mr. Stoddard, who was on guard that night, was urging Mr. Booth, who sat stoical and

dumb, to go home with him, the manager of the theatre entered with an open telegram in his hand; it read:

"This is the fourth telegram. Why does not Mr. Booth answer? He must come at once," signed by the physician. On the table still lay, with unbroken seals, the three missives of evil omen.

The midnight train had left. There was nothing until seven o'clock the next morning. Nothing to do but wait the slow passing of the hours. All through that night Mrs. Stoddard made coffee for him over an alcohol lamp as he slowly paced the floor; one moment refusing to believe his wife could be so seriously ill — the next, crushed and hopeless with grief.

In the gray dawn of the winter morning Mr. Booth and Mr. Stoddard started on the journey. In a letter, written later to Captain Badeau, Mr. Booth said: "When I was in the cars I saw every time I looked from the window Mary dead, with a white cloth tied round her neck and chin. I did not find her so exactly, nor in the position I saw her from the window, but I saw her as distinctly, a dozen times at least, as I saw her when I arrived — dead, and in her coffin."

On the arrival of the train in Boston a friend with his carriage waited the coming. As the friend moved toward him Mr. Booth raised his hand, saying, "Do

not tell me, I know." During the drive to the country house not one word was spoken. When the carriage stopped, Mr. Booth sprang from it, passed rapidly up the stairs, paused a moment at the bedroom door, opened it — those waiting heard the key turned in the lock, and through the long hours of the night there was no other sound. What took place behind those closed doors is sacred; even thought itself should enter veiled. In that holy sanctuary, beside his recumbent dead, the only witness to the agony, the struggle, the repentance, the renunciation. When the morning came, the dragon of menacing evil lay vanquished forever at his feet.

When in the half light of the coming day Mr. Booth came from the room, the ghost of what had been, it was like the passing of Raphael's Saint Michael — so triumphant was face and figure. The watcher entering the room later saw on the face of the dead no longer pain nor grief; in their place sat "gentle Peace." In the lifeless hand a rose was crushed, and on the breast, held by a slender thread of gold, the miniature to rest forever on the truest heart.

No tribute can express more truthfully the unusual loveliness of this rare nature, whose little life dream rounded so with sleep, ending on earth with her twenty-second year, than Dr. Thomas W. Parsons has in his lines:

MARY BOOTH

What shall we do now, Mary being dead,
Or say, or write, that shall express the half?
What can we do, but pillow the fair head
And let the springtime write her epitaph.

As it will soon in snowdrop, violet,
Wind flower and columbine and maiden's tear;
Each letter of that pretty alphabet
That spells in flowers the pageant of the year.

She was a maiden for a man to love;
She was a woman for a husband's life;
One that had learnt to value far above
The name of Love, the sacred name of Wife.

Her little life dream rounded so with sleep,
Had all there is of life — except gray hairs,
Hope, love, trust, passion, and devotion deep —
And that mysterious tie a mother bears.

She hath fulfilled her promise, and hath passed;
Set her down gently at the iron door;
Eyes look on that loved image for the last,
Now cover it with earth — her earth no more.

Mrs. Booth was buried in Mt. Auburn quietly, and as she would have wished, without display. Among the little group of relations and friends who stood beside the grave was Mr. Booth's mother, and John Wilkes Booth, Mr. William Warren, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Dr. T. W. Parsons, and a few others who loved her well. Later when a tablet was placed over the mound, Dr. Parsons wrote the epitaph:

"The handful here, that once was Mary's earth,
Held, while it breathed, so beautiful a soul,
That, when she died, all recognized her birth,
And had their sorrow in serene control.

"'Not here! not here!' to every mourner's heart
The wintry wind seemed whispering round her bier;
And when the tomb-door opened, with a start
We heard it echoed from within — 'Not here!'

"Shouldst thou, sad pilgrim, who mayst hither pass,
Note in these flowers a delicater hue,
Should spring come earlier to this hallowed grass,
Or the bee later linger on the dew,

"Know that her spirit to her body lent
Such sweetness, grace, as only goodness can,
That even her dust, and this her monument,
Have yet a spell to stay one lonely man —

"Lonely through life, but looking for the day
When what is mortal of himself shall sleep,
When human passion shall have passed away,
And Love no longer be a thing to weep."

The life that followed in the next few months in this deserted house by the bereaved and lonely master is faintly sketched in some of the letters he wrote to his nearest friends. Passages have been taken from these letters to read as one, but it is the heart of many.

"She was to me at once, wife, mother, sister, guide, and savior. All is dark. I know not where to turn, how to direct the deserted vessel now. Two

EDWIN BOOTH'S HOUSE AT DORCHESTER
1899

little tiny years, and the bright future is a dark and dismal past. I have no ambition, no one to please. My acting was studied to please her, and after I left the theatre and we were alone her advice was all I asked, all I valued. If she was pleased, I was satisfied; if not, I felt a spur to urge me on. They tell me that time and use will soften the blow. God forbid! My grief is sweet to me. It is a part of her. Were I to live a thousand years, I would ask no greater blessing than to mourn for her. In this once happy home I see on every hand remembrances of her — her sewing, her dresses — all are a part of her, and every corner brings her back. As I wake at night and look for her in the darkness, I hold my breath and listen, and fancy I can hear her speak — away somewhere. Every time the door opens I expect to see the loved form of her who was my world. Every day now seems endless. The nights seem lengthened into a century. I am in such haste to reach that beginning or that end of all, that I am chafed and breathless with my own impatience. I regard death as God has intended we should understand it — as the breaking of eternal daylight, and a birthday of the soul. I have always thought of death as coolly as sleep, and gladly would I take that sleep were I permitted. Believe in one great truth, God is — and as surely as you and I are flesh and bones, so are we also spirits eternal. While she was here I was shut

up in her devotion, I never dreamed she could be taken from me — as I have ever lived, so live I now, within."

The weeks following the death of his wife Mr. Booth was on the narrow line between sanity and insanity; a strange delirium held him in its clutch. Much of the time he was as Hamlet — with the "antic disposition" of variable moods of black despair, hysterical laughter, and tears.

Here in this lonely house, with his world of shadows, we must leave our Prince, and turn the page to the other actors in this life's history.

CHAPTER V

FROM the evening in Mr. Bierstadt's studio Mr. Aldrich made no attempt to disguise his feelings toward the girl he had met there. His downfall was so rapid and precipitous that the girl herself refused to accept it seriously, using all the finesse in her nature to fence with the edged tools laid at her feet, her youthful mind having been taught the foolish maxim that love that would prove real was the flower sprung from the plant of a slow growth.

The evening of Mrs. Booth's death Mr. Aldrich had written asking the privilege of an hour in her company, expressing also the hope that he might look forward to a cup of tea, and toast made by her over the cheer of the living-room fire. The plan had been made for that evening to be passed at the theatre. Although through the week there had been but the antithesis of pleasure in being there, the respite from nervous tension would be grateful, even if something only half as delightful as the expected visitor had been offered in its place. Nothing was said of the expected caller to her companions who, with the parental advice to "go to bed early," left her seemingly absorbed in her books.

When Mr. Aldrich came, she saw in the manner of

his greeting that neither coquetry nor finesse would prove her shield. The question would be put to the test, "to win or lose it all."

"The wingéd hours of bliss" that evening passed much too quickly for the happy lovers. Once in the midst of gay and joyous laughter a sudden silence fell, bringing with it a nameless fear. May it not be possible that the soul then awaiting its final flight came for a moment with its valediction?

The evening was nearly over before the petition came for the cup of tea and the toast. With a long toasting-fork over the open fire the toast was made, the tea brewed, the little table set,

> "And she and I the banquet scene completing
> With dreamy words, and very pleasant eating!"

The next morning a note from Mrs. Stoddard brought the appalling word of Mrs. Booth's death.

This intelligence was for the young betrothed her first awakening to the discipline and sorrow of the world. Love and Death in such close kinship proved strong allies in weaving the invisible thread in the web of the new life, seen through Love's betrothal ring, and bringing to it a deeper meaning.

In the quiet days before the announcement of the engagement there was much to be learned of Mr. Aldrich's life prior to the hour of their happy meeting. The sketches of his boyish days when he lived

with his grandfather in the "Nutter House" in Portsmouth were a never-failing delight to his listener.

When Mr. Aldrich was a lad of fourteen his father died, and soon after he went to New York to take a clerkship in his uncle's banking house. His days there were given to the perplexities of uncongenial work, the nights spent with his tutor in the work he delighted in, studies and books, with now and then time taken for occasional verses, to be written and printed in the Poet's Corner of the "Portsmouth Journal."

After a struggle of four years in the alien company of algebraical calculations, with the Muse constantly intruding herself and visualizing her presence on odd corners of billheads and papers, the day of renunciation came, when, taking the cumbersome ledgers in his arms and depositing them on his uncle's desk, he declared that henceforth his sole allegiance would be to the Muse, and that no longer would he endeavor to serve two masters. From this ultimatum there were loud expostulations, indignation and disappointment as well; for the uncle had looked forward to the time when business cares might weigh too heavily and the burden be shifted to younger shoulders. When the battle was finally over, Mr. Aldrich and his Goddess went sorrowfully homewards. He had chosen.

"But thou, rare soul, thou hast dwelt with me,
Spirit of Poesy! Thou divine
Breath of the morning, thou shalt be
Goddess, forever and ever mine."

"At this time Mr. Aldrich was nineteen years old. He had published his first volume of verse, written a poem which gained almost at once a national celebrity, and resigned his place in his uncle's counting-room, to follow the life of letters."

A few months later in the year Mr. Nathaniel Parker Willis, who was then in the zenith of his fame, invited Mr. Aldrich to the assistant editorship of the "Home Journal," an office that had previously been filled by Edgar Allan Poe, and more recently by James Parton. Very graphic were the word-pictures Mr. Aldrich made of this slender youth, sitting in state in the editorial chair, and of the painful mortification caused by the perversity of his golden hair, which would curl when the day was damp or warm, giving to him a look of boyishness most ill-adapted to the new dignity. Very delightful were his reminiscences of visits made at Idlewild, Mr. Willis's home on the Hudson River, and of seeing there the fair daughter, Imogene, a blonde of the purest Saxon type, with blue eyes, light brown hair, and delicate, regular features. Mr. Willis said she was very like her mother, who he thought when he first saw her was the loveliest

girl he had ever seen, and that after a week's acquaintance he had made her an offer of marriage, and was accepted. The intimate companionship with his chief, who at this time was about fifty years old, was vital in interest and charm. Mr. Willis from early youth was a figure of importance, both in the literary and social world. Professor Peck in writing of him says: "In Europe he lived with nobles and gentlemen; dined with ease with kings; consorted with the greatest in whatever land he visited; entertained lavishly; went everywhere — and all by the magic of his pen. One who had met so many interesting personages would of necessity become interesting himself, by this very fact, even if he were quite usual, and Willis was not usual."

Mr. Aldrich said that to Willis belonged the honor of making Thackeray known in our country, long before "Vanity Fair" was written. He knew Dickens when he was looked upon as only a smart young writer. He had breakfasted with Charles and Mary Lamb; knew Landor; and to him the Countess Guiccioli imparted her memories of Byron. He was also the friend of Lady Byron, and of Byron's sister, Augusta Leigh, and of Joanna Baillie, Scott's friend; Disraeli, Bulwer-Lytton, Samuel Rogers, and in truth all of England's famous writers in the early Victorian period. In America he had a friendship with almost every man of letters. He went to school

with Emerson; was among the first to give encouragement to Lowell; was a friend to Hawthorne; and kindness itself to Bayard Taylor when he was a friendless boy. Mr. Aldrich thought Willis very attractive and with exceedingly good manners, and that, in spite of a certain dandyism and jauntiness that was characteristic, he had real manliness, and always the courage of his convictions; that he possessed the rare gift of making persons see what he described. His sketches of the literary society of London he thought would be eventually of such value that they would take a permanent place beside the memoirs of Horace Walpole and other writers of the time.

CHAPTER VI

THE evening came when all the stories of the literary life of which Mr. Aldrich had spoken paled before the more human interest of his friendship with the adopted daughter of Wendell Phillips, whom he had met on one of his pilgrimages to the "Old Town by the Sea."

Insidiously, and unsuspectingly to each, friendship had changed and unacknowledged love usurped the place. Between them, however, always stood an angel with flaming sword — "The Cause," as it was named by those who, under its banner, were willing to lay down life and march bravely to death, were it needful. The abolition of slavery had been for years a question of tremendous interest among the relatively small group of men and women who held it unrighteous and un-Christian to hold in bondage their fellow men. To this daughter of Wendell Phillips "The Cause" seemed the one important motive and purpose of life. All the years she had known had been passed in this atmosphere of almost single thought, giving to her presence a kind of fire shining through and about her like the lights in a jewel. Nothing could be more delightful than the personality of this girl as Mr. Aldrich sketched her. Tall and slender, the black eyes full of intelli-

gence and fire; gay, quick, and always different from anybody else he had ever met; a girl of uncommon beauty of person and character. Unhappily for both, Mr. Aldrich at this time was not in matters of heart an entirely free agent. The summer before there had been a moonlight ride with a young friend of his mother's, "And on such a night, on such a night as this, when the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees, and they did make no noise," who could resist propinquity and moonlight combined? Assuredly not a young poet, in love with love. Mr. Aldrich felt his engagement to be an invulnerable armor, through which no arrow could pierce. Loyally wearing it, he could enjoy to the fullest the intimate companionship into which he was thrown with this girl, who was visiting his nearest friend in the "Old Town by the Sea." It was not until he was actually submerged, wrecked, without rudder or compass, that he realized the danger, although Miss Garnault, dimly conscious of their mutual insecurity, endeavored to lead Mr. Aldrich astray with the thought that an elderly friend of Mr. Phillips, who frequently wrote her fatherly and Platonic letters, full of "The Cause," owned her allegiance, and with this imaginary wooer, doubly safeguarded, they might breathe the magic air without hazard or fear.

With Mr. Aldrich's recognition of his real feeling for Miss Garnault was deep contrition and sorrow

for his broken faith toward one, who with most understanding sympathy forgave. The story was told, and to her the initiative left, with freedom to break the engagement or to let it continue as it was before. The ring and his letters, tied with a blue ribbon, were returned, and Mr. Aldrich, with very perturbed and unhappy mind, returned to the dignity of the editorial chair, where he and his Muse, in closer companionship, indited a melancholy "Nest of Sonnets" in which "Wailing Winds," "Dreary Waste," "Tender Thought," "Speechless Pain," and kindred themes were much in evidence.

"When I was young and light of heart,
I made sad songs with easy art."

A few months later Mr. Aldrich asked Mr. Phillips for his consent to try and win the hand and heart of his adopted daughter. It was to Mr. Phillips a most surprising and unwelcome proposition. He refused to believe his daughter had grown up. "She was much too young to think of love, and when the real love came into her life, it should be brought by a man to whom 'The Cause' was dear. Otherwise the union could never be a happy one, for the flame of 'The Cause' burnt day and night on the altar of the inner shrine — the beacon light illuminating the work that was hers to do."

A concession was finally made — that there should be no engagement, but an understanding, so-

called; that if after a year both were of the same mind, Mr. Aldrich should come again, and this time the answer might be yes. But until the year was over there should be no meeting, although a few letters might be allowed. Smilingly they parted. Only a year to wait, and both so strong and firm in their belief in the fidelity and unchangeableness of their love. Although Mr. Aldrich was nominally but an assistant editor, his chief came less and less to the editorial sanctum, so that there was little leisure for anything but the routine work of the newspaper, and when measures for the abolition of slavery were strongly urged as proper themes for the editorial columns, the young assistant, like Cassius, "put it by," to his possible undoing with the fair one of his choice. The limited correspondence of four letters a month may have seemed as if too much coveted space was given to the mooted question. But with this exception they brought to the busy life settled content and happiness. When the year of probation was almost at its close, a letter came asking Mr. Aldrich to come at once to Boston, and ending with the words, "I am wretchedly unhappy!"

Mr. Aldrich took the first available train, and with grim foreboding found himself at the door of Wendell Phillips's quaint old house in Essex Street. A servant, evidently expecting him, ushered him in. In a few moments she returned with the request

that Mr. Aldrich would go to Miss Phœbe's room, as she was ill, confined to her bed. The interview there was dramatic in the extreme. With tears and feverish excitement the story was told. There had been threats against Mr. Phillips's life — the coming of an apostle of "The Cause," George Smalley, a crusader with sword and pistol ready to redress the wrongs of the world. The Essex Street house a fort, which for three days and nights the white knight guarded; the end of the comedy, or tragedy, easily foreseen. The reward of valor the fair lady's hand. For our Knight of the Woeful Countenance there could be nothing but acquiescence in this decree. The stunning blow should be met bravely, as befits a man; but in parting forever he wished the lady to know that in that room lay buried all his hopes and dreams. And should in long distant years another woman come into his lonely life, she must understand that he still could give affection, but never love again, for that must now be like the ashes of roses, dead in his heart.

"They parted, with clasps of hand,
And kisses, and burning tears,
They met in a foreign land,
After some twenty years.

"Met as acquaintances meet,
Smilingly, tranquil-eyed —
Not even the least little beat
Of the heart, upon either side!"

For the next three or four years editorial work proved a panacea to unhappiness. The increasing responsibility of the paper, with the added work of reading manuscripts for other publishing houses, left no unoccupied time, except the hours stolen from sleep, for the "swallow flights" of song, and until the meeting in Mr. Bierstadt's studio all women became somewhat as shadows in Mr. Aldrich's busy life.

From the time of Mr. Aldrich's engagement, almost to his marriage, the dominant note underlying every condition of life was the Civil War, bringing in its wake sorrow and desolation all over the country. Scarcely a life that was not in some way affected by it. Mr. Aldrich was then editing the "Illustrated News," and one day being in the street with tablet and pencil in hand, making a sketch of the assembling of a mob to resist the drafting of men for the army, one of the leaders of the riot noticing his occupation set up the cry, "Down with him! Down with him! Kill him!" Nothing but youthful agility and fine running powers saved him from serious injury; and even then in the foray his wrists were badly cut, disabling him for some time from using his pen, but giving him the opportunity to go often into the country for brief visits to his fiancée.

"Ah, graybeard, what a happy thing it was
When love was in its spring."

Mr. Aldrich had a wide circle of friends in literary and artistic life. Nothing could be more pleasing than the kindness in which they included the young girl to whom Mr. Aldrich had become engaged and welcomed her to their friendship.

Many were the small teas given in her honor in the Studio Building in Tenth Street, where many artists of reputation had their studios and most of them their homes. Very delightful was this meeting-ground with its strong feeling of good comradeship which pervaded the atmosphere. When from one of the studios a picture was sold, there seemed general rejoicing, as if they were all members of one family, and each glad of the good fortune of his brother. Three or four times during the season all the artists combined and sent out cards to friends and acquaintances for an "At Home," an "Artist Reception," so-called. For that evening every studio would be brilliantly lighted, gay with flowers, small tea-tables or punch-tables set in each one: the crowds of visitors wandering from room to room, here and there as the spirit moved, through the big building. Invitations to these receptions were much prized. Not only were the artists themselves to be seen in their varied and picturesque studios, but distinguished strangers and guests from other cities were also to be met, and during the war there was certain to be the latest news from the front, for everywhere

officers and soldiers were much in evidence. Mr. Launt Thompson's studio was one of the largest, and as he was a great favorite, choice spirits were always to be met there both night and day.

Memory recalls most pleasantly an afternoon, soon after Mr. Aldrich's engagement was announced, when a cast of a hand was to be made. There seemed to be wireless communication through the entire building, so that if anything of interest was happening in any of the rooms the whole community knew of it. On this afternoon artist after artist dropped in, until there were no longer seats left to be given them. The picture of that room on that day is still very vivid in my memory. The studio was high-studded and long. A colossal statue (General Scott, I think) dominated the centre of the room. It was still in clay and shrouded in wet cloths, shaping the outlines of a gigantic figure, and giving to it a weird feeling of awe and mystery. "The Trapper," finished and mounted on a pedestal; the life-size bust of Mr. Booth as Hamlet, in process of making; a beautifully chiselled, oval face of a young girl; a plaster medallion of Mr. Aldrich, later given to him as a wedding present; numberless torsos, legs and arms, hands and feet, hung on pegs and nails all over the brown-stained walls of the room, with here and there a piece of tapestry or bright rugs to give warmth and color, and always in a corner the alcohol

urn for the brewing of tea or coffee for the unexpected or expected guest. The coming of Mr. Booth (who had returned to New York) with his brothers, Junius and John Wilkes, the picture-making talk of the studios, and of Mr. Booth's saying to Mr. Bierstadt and Mr. Gifford "that they must lose all sense of being save in the painted ripple of a lake, or the peaks of a snow-capped mountain."

Mr. and Mrs. Jervis McEntee were the only married members of the fraternity that lived in the Studio Building. Mrs. McEntee, greatly beloved, and always willing to act as chaperon for the bachelor artists when they held court. The McEntees' apartment was the only one that had the glorification of stairs and a kitchenette, and many were the charming little dinners served there, with eligible men always to be had waiting the hoped-for summons.

The first opportunity Mr. Aldrich had to introduce his fiancée to his more formal friends and acquaintances was at the Century Club. A testimonial was to be given there to Mr. William Cullen Bryant on his seventieth birthday, to which the principal literary and artistic circles were invited. A letter from Mr. Aldrich that bears the date of November 1, 1864, expresses the excitement the invitation brought. The allusion to gold lace and brass buttons was not without a certain triumph to one

who in the past had feared their glitter might prove more alluring than civilian tweeds:

"I hunted up Thompson to find out what persons are expected to wear at the Bryant festival. He knew as little as I, but as gentlemen are requested to wear black coats and white chokers, why, I suppose the ladies will be allowed to get their dear selves up regardless. But don't you do it. Your black and green silk frock and the lace shawl, and your hair high, will make you look as pretty as need be. You will probably never have a chance to see so many poets and artists together as will be there; and I shall be proud to take you on an invitation not sent to me because I am rich, or a member of the Century Club, but only because I am a literary man. A Brigadier-General of the Army of the Potomac could not get you there! All of which pleases me."

It was a brilliant company that gathered at the Century Club on the appointed night. In welcoming the guest of the evening, the President, Mr. George Bancroft, said that the object of the meeting was primarily to celebrate the career of their guest as a poet. "While the mountains and the oceanside ring with the tramp of cavalry, and the din of cannon, we take a respite in the serene regions of ideal pursuits."

Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered an address, and poems were written (many of them read) for the

occasion by Dr. Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Bayard Taylor, George H. Boker, Richard Henry Stoddard, John Greenleaf Whittier, Julia Ward Howe, and many other lesser lights.

CHAPTER VII

MR. BOOTH had returned to New York two months after his wife's death and taken a house in Seventeenth Street, where he was living with his motherless baby and the "impatient longing for his lost happiness." In a letter written to Miss Cary in the summer of that year, he says of his life and his household: "I have been kept as busy as though I had been acting all this while, for it is my wish to bring out several of the Shakespearean plays in a superior style, and the whole management of the affair is in my hands. Everything looks fairly prosperous for the coming season at the Winter Garden (1864), and when I begin, October 3d, I shall be kept at it until next April, when I shall act in Boston. Dear Mother is happy with her children about her, thank God! but she still has an absent one, the youngest boy [John Wilkes Booth], strange, wild, and ever moving; he causes us all some degree of anxiety."

Mr. Booth had become part proprietor of the Winter Theatre. In writing later in the winter to a friend he said: "I have scarcely had breathing time. The terrible success of 'Hamlet' seems to have swallowed up everything else theatrical; and the de-

sire I have to follow it up with something still better done in the way of costumes and scenery keeps me far off in fairyland day and night, in my dreams and in my days."

The profound sorrow of Mrs. Booth's death had deepened the introspective expression of Mr. Booth's face, and made his body seem still more frail. In playing "Hamlet" this year he used no make-up save his inky coat and sable weeds, nor did he need to, looking Hamlet's self. His kinship with Shakespeare revealed itself more and more with every utterance of Shakespeare's verse.

In writing to Miss Cary in the early spring Mr. Booth said: "Our war news is indeed glorious. I am happy in it, and glory in it, although Southern-born. God grant the end, or rather the beginning, is near at hand, for when the war ceases we shall only have begun to live — a nation never to be shaken again, ten times more glorious, a million times firmer than before. I have but ten more nights to complete the one hundredth of 'Hamlet's' performance this season. Then I hope to give a benefit for the Shakespearean Statue Fund, in which I am deeply interested, and retire to pack up my trunks for Boston."

On March 20, 1865, Mr. Booth finished his hundredth night of "Hamlet" at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York, and on March 24 opened in

Boston with an engagement beginning with great brilliancy and ending in such grim tragedy. In the last week of this engagement the news of the surrender of Lee's army was received. The account of what followed the news of the surrender, Mr. James Ford Rhodes has told so graphically that I quote from his page:

"The people of the North rejoiced . . . as they had never rejoiced before, nor did they during the remainder of the century on any occasion show such an exuberance of gladness. Business was suspended and the courts adjourned. Cannons fired, bells rang, flags floated, houses and shops were gay with the red, white, and blue. There were illuminations and bonfires. The streets of the cities and towns were filled with men, who shook hands warmly, embraced each other, shouted, laughed and cheered, and were indeed beside themselves in their great joy. There were pledges in generous wines and much common drinking in bar-rooms and liquor shops. There were fantastic processions, grotesque performances, and some tomfoolery. Grave old gentlemen forgot their age and dignity and played the pranks of schoolboys. But always above these foolish and bibulous excesses sounded the patriotic and religious note of the jubilee. 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' were the words most frequently sung in the street, the Board of Trade, and on the Stock Ex-

change. 'Twenty thousand men in the busiest haunts of trade in one of the most thronged cities of the world,' Motley wrote, 'uncovered their heads spontaneously and sang the psalm of thanksgiving, "Praise God."' Noteworthy was the service in Trinity Church, New York, one hour after midday of the Tuesday following the surrender, when the church overflowed with worshippers, who were in the main people of distinction. The choir chanted the 'Te Deum' and at the bidding of the clergyman, the congregation rose, and, inspired by the great organ and guided by the choir, sang the noble anthem 'Gloria in Excelsis.' These opening words, 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men,' had a peculiar significance to the Northern people who during these days of rejoicing were for the most part full of generous feeling for the South. Patriotism expressed itself in the songs 'John Brown's Body,' 'My Country, 't is of thee,' 'Rally round the Flag,' and the 'Star-Spangled Banner.' Lowell instinctively put into words what his countrymen had in their hearts: 'The news is from Heaven. I felt a strange and tender exaltation. I wanted to laugh and I wanted to cry, and ended by holding my peace and feeling devoutly thankful. There is something magnificent in having a country to love.'"

On a day forever memorable, the 14th of April,

in Charleston Harbor, where four years earlier the war began, a national thanksgiving was being celebrated. Lee's surrender and the fall of Richmond were considered the end of the insurrection, and the Government had resolved that on this anniversary the flag of the Union should receive a conspicuous salute on the spot where, ingloriously, it had been hauled down. Precisely at the hour of noon General Robert Anderson hoisted to its place above Fort Sumter's ruins the identical flag which he, in bitter humiliation, had been forced to lower four years before.

Sumter saluted the flag with one hundred guns. Every little fort and battery which had fired upon the garrison at the commencement of the war, now gave a national salute. The people sang the "Star-Spangled Banner," Henry Ward Beecher delivered an impressive oration, "and while the rejoicing went on echoes of a jubilation resounded throughout the North."

At Washington this 14th day of April (ever to be remembered in the annals of history) was one of peace and thanksgiving. The President, who had intently watched the campaigns and studied the battles, was now somewhat relieved from the responsibility and hourly anxiety which insistently had filled his days and nights. The inexpressible sadness that had become almost a permanent expres-

sion of his eyes was less noticeable; the furrows which sleepless nights had imprinted on the kindly face seemed less marked on this Good Friday, the day ordained to be his last on earth. General Grant had arrived in Washington that morning and had gone to the White House. The President related to him an ominous dream he had the night before of a strange and indescribable vessel, moving swiftly toward a dark and boundless shore. "It is my usual dream," he said in describing it, "and has preceded every important event of the war."

Later in the day there had been a cabinet meeting, and the subject of reconstruction was taken up. At the close of the meeting, the President impressively said, "Reconstruction is the great question pending, and we now must begin to act in the interest of peace." The rest of the day was one of unusual enjoyment, passed with his family and intimate friends.

In Boston, on the memorable evening, an enthusiastic audience had filled every available seat in the large Boston Theatre, listening with ardent interest and applause to Mr. Booth's portrayal of Sir Edward Mortimer in "The Iron Chest," a play written by George Colman, the younger, in which Edmund Kean achieved a great triumph. The notice of the play for that evening, copied from the "Boston Herald" of that date, follows:

BOSTON THEATRE

Henry C. Jarrett.....Lessee and Manager

Tonight [April 14]

FAREWELL BENEFIT OF
EDWIN BOOTH

Who will appear as Sir Edward Mortimer in

THE IRON CHEST

and as

DON CÆSAR DE BAZAN

Doors open at 7½; to commence at 7¾.
Tomorrow Afternoon, Mr. Booth as Hamlet, and his last appearance.

At the same hour, at Ford's Theatre in Washington, the following bill was being presented:

FORD'S THEATRE
TENTH STREET, ABOVE E

Season II .....Week XXXI .....Night 19
Whole Number of Nights, 495

JOHN T. FORD.....*Proprietor and Manager*
(Also of Holliday St. Theatre, Baltimore and Academy of Music, Phil'a)

Stage Manager.....J. B. WRIGHT
Treasurer.....H. CLAY FORD

FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 14TH, 1865

BENEFIT!

AND

LAST NIGHT

OF MISS

LAURA KEENE

The Distinguished Manageress, Authoress and Actress

supported by

MR. JOHN DYOTT

and

MR. HARRY HAWK

TOM TAYLOR'S Celebrated Eccentric Comedy

As originally produced in America by Miss Keene and performed by her upwards of

One Thousand Nights

ENTITLED

OUR AMERICAN COUSIN

FLORENCE TRENCHARD (Her Original Character)	Miss Laura Keene
ABEL MURCOTT, *Clerk to Attorney*	John Dyott
ASA TRENCHARD	Harry Hawk
SIR EDWARD TRENCHARD	T. C. Gourlay
LORD DUNDREARY	E. A. Emerson
MR. COYLE, *Attorney*	J. Matthews
LIEUTENANT VERNON, R. N.	W. J. Ferguson
CAPTAIN DE BOOTS	C. Byrnes
BINNEY	G. G. Spear
BUDDICOMB, *a valet*	J. H. Evans
JOHN WHICKER, *a gardener*	J. L. De Bonay
RASPER, *a groom*	
BAILIFFS	G. A. Parkhurst and L. Johnson
MARY TRENCHARD	Miss J. Gourlay
MRS. MONTCHESSINGTON	Mrs. H. Muzzy
AUGUSTA	Mrs. H. Trueman
GEORGIANA	Miss M. Hart
SHARPE	Mrs. J. H. Evans
SKILLET	Miss M. Gourlay

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 15

Benefit of MISS JENNIE GOURLAY when will be presented
BOUCICAULT'S Great Sensational Drama
THE OCTOROON

EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 17

Engagement of the YOUNG AMERICAN TRAGEDIAN
EDWIN ADAMS
For Twelve Nights Only

THE PRICES OF ADMISSION

Orchestra	$1.00
Dress Circle and Parquette	.75
Family Circle	.25
Private Boxes	$6 and $10

J. R. FORD, *Business Manager*

At the theatre in Washington, on the memorable evening of April 14, every place was taken, until there was no longer standing-room. The audience was electrical with excitement and nervous tension — at last the rebellion had collapsed, the war was over. The great Captain, whose firm and steady guidance had piloted the country through its grim peril, had selected this evening for the enjoyment of a play, and had asked his victorious general, Grant, and his wife, to share the pleasure. But fortunately the desire to see their boys a few hours earlier had made them cancel the engagement, and their places were taken by Major Henry Reed Rathbone and his fiancée, Miss Harris.

The President, enclosed in the seclusion of a small stage box on the second tier, half hidden from the gaze and adulation of the crowded auditorium, but fully conscious of the deep feeling of affection and confidence with which he was regarded, the happy evening passed until ten o'clock, when the door behind his chair opened noiselessly, and John Wilkes Booth entered, holding a pistol in one hand, a knife in the other — seeming as if he were taking a part in a play. Almost instantly upon his entrance he put the pistol to the President's head and fired. Dropping the weapon, he took the knife in his right hand, and when Major Rathbone sprang toward him he savagely struck at him and severely wounded his arm. Booth then rushed forward to the rail of the box, and vaulted lightly onto the stage, where a foe he had not counted on in his conspiracy tripped and held him — a flag, the flag of the Union which he hoped to dismember. With the million men then under arms, any one of whom would gladly have given life to save this priceless life, how strange and subtle the fate that left the flag to be the only sentinel on duty, but how well it fitted with Lincoln's vein of prophetic mysticism which was so strong an element of his character!

Booth would have got safely away but for the flag which draped the box, catching his spur, and in falling he broke his leg, but instantly rose as if he had

received no hurt, turned to the audience and shouted the State motto of Virginia, "Sic semper tyrannis," and fled out of sight; leaped upon his horse which was waiting in the alley and rode rapidly away in the light of the just-risen moon.

The President was carried to a small brick house across the street, where for nine hours he lingered in unconscious existence. Then a look of beautiful peace came to the wan face, and the great heart was at rest. "Nothing can touch him further."

At the same hour that John Wilkes Booth in Washington had played his part in the greatest tragedy ever enacted on any stage, Edwin Booth at the Boston Theatre was being called out again and again, to receive the tremendous applause he had aroused. After repeated calls the green baize curtain was rung down, and Mr. Booth went slowly homeward, the verses with which the comedy of "Don Cæsar de Bazan" ends still echoing in his ears:

> "Long live the King! Long live the King! Long live the King!
> Who e'er repays our love with love again,
> Let peace be joined to length of days,
> Let peace be joined to bless his happy reign."

As the verse repeated itself over and over in Mr. Booth's memory on account of the victorious rejoicing over Lee's surrender, the lines took a deeper meaning and gave a stir of pleasure in the knowl-

edge that the only vote he had ever cast was for Lincoln who had brought peace to his country.

In the gray dawn of the next morning Mr. Booth was suddenly awakened by his black servant coming into his room, and as his order had always been imperative that he was never to be disturbed until he rang, Mr. Booth angrily demanded what the intrusion meant. — "Oh, Massa Edwin," came the answer, "you never could guess what has happened! Somethin' dreadful! The President has been shot. And, oh, Massa Edwin, I am afraid Massa John has done it!" And then bringing his hand forward gave to his master the paper containing the appalling news.

Incredulously Mr. Booth read, until he came to the flourish of the dagger, and the shout of "Sic semper tyrannis"; in that he recognized the fanatical and misguided spirit, the self-appointed avenger of a South, whose Brutus he theatrically thought himself.

The impression of that day — the 15th of April — in New York is ineffaceable, and even now, after all the years that have passed, in writing of it I again feel the thrill and throb of emotion as in that early morning when Mr. Aldrich, pale and breathless, brought the terrible news which a journalistic friend had written and slipped under his door. "The President is shot, and it is supposed that John Wilkes Booth is the assassin." This ghastly intelligence held for us a twofold horror — crushing sorrow for the

President, so cruelly taken in the hour of his triumph, and a weight of sympathy for the poor mother who idolized her wayward and misguided boy, who, fanatical for secession, had only been held from joining Lee's army and fighting against his country by his promise given in answer to his mother's prayer.

Breakfast was hurriedly served, and then through the crowded streets, where already over the gay decorations of victory black trappings of woe were being hung, we came to the sombre household within whose walls a mother and sister sat stricken and stunned with grief, like Rachel of old refusing to be comforted. Outside the newsboys, with strident voice, were calling, "The President's death, and the arrest of John Wilkes Booth." While in answer to these words the mother moaned: "O God, if this be true, let him shoot himself, let him not live to be hung! Spare him, spare us, spare the name that dreadful disgrace!" Then came the sound of the postman's whistle, and with the ring of the doorbell a letter was handed to Mrs. Booth. It was from John Wilkes Booth, written in the afternoon before the tragedy. A half-sheet of a fairly good-sized letter paper. It was an affectionate letter, such as any mother would like to receive from her son, containing nothing of any particular moment, but ghastly to read now, with the thought of what the feelings

of the man must have been who held the pen in writing it, knowing what overwhelming sorrow the next hours would bring, and vaguely groping by affectionate words to bring to her whom he loved most some alleviation, some ray of light in the darkness in which he was to envelop her.

There had been a telegram received from Boston which said Mr. Booth would take the midnight train and be with his mother early in the morning. It bade her hope. Through the unending hours of that awful day Mr. Booth shut himself within his room, his prayerful wish that the frenzied mob might seek and find him and end his misery. And ever present in his memory was the agonizing thought of his mother in her wretchedness and grief, for John Wilkes was her idol, her youngest born, and whatever the world might find of him unlovely he was to her a most devoted son.

The next morning at Mr. Booth's house in New York a small group of friends awaited his coming. The figure that stepped from the carriage, wrapped in a long cloak, with a soft hat drawn close over his face, was as spectral as if the grave had given up its dead. It seemed the visible incarnation of grief of such depth that face and figure seemed turned to stone. As the little group of friends came forward with silent greeting his were the only eyes without tears.

In the sad days following this home-coming, Mr. Aldrich was Mr. Booth's constant companion, a vigil that was not without threatening danger, as daily letters, notes, and messages came to the house addressed to Mr. Booth warning him that the name of Booth should be exterminated. None should bear it and live. "Bullets were marked for him and his household." "His house would be burnt." Cries for justice and vengeance, and every other indignity that hot indignation and wrathful words could indite.

Through the long hours of those days and nights Mr. Booth sat in almost frozen silence. There was but one ray of hope in that desolate household — the hope that John Wilkes might not live to be hung, that they might be spared that last disgrace. Through the sad waiting no unkind word was spoken of the son and brother whose misconception and unbalanced brain had brought the great calamity and sorrow to the Nation and to them. His biased thought was as plainly interpreted in those piteous days as when later they read in his diary, a week after he had killed the President, "I am hunted like a dog through swamps and woods . . . with every man's hand against me . . . for doing what Brutus was honored for."

Until after the capture and death of John Wilkes, Mr. Aldrich was constantly with Mr. Booth — sat with him through the mournful days, and waked

with him through the interminable nights. Over their bed hung a life-sized portrait of John Wilkes. When the bedroom lights were put out and the glimmer of the street lights flickered faintly in through the closed shutters, the portrait to their excited imaginations seemed to become animate — a living presence, and watched with them through the night, holding sleep from their eyelids. An unexplainable feeling of infinite pity for the poor misguided ghost, a fugitive and wanderer, fleeing from pursuit, without place to lay his head, and asking shelter. Neither had the heart or the courage to order its removal.

On the tenth day of waiting in this bereaved and unhappy household a telegram came from Philadelphia to Mrs. Booth asking that she would come there at once, as Mrs. Clarke, her daughter, was seriously ill.

Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Thompson were with Mr. Booth when the telegram came. Mr. Thompson offered to take Mrs. Booth to the train for Philadelphia, which unfortunately started from Jersey City, and entailed the long drive through the crowded streets. When Mr. Thompson had his charge in the carriage he was startled by the loud call of a newsboy crying, "Death of John Wilkes Booth. Capture of his companion." Mr. Thompson made some trivial excuse which enabled him to close the windows and draw down the curtains, and all through

the endless way to the ferry was the accompaniment of this shrill and tragic cry, which Mr. Thompson struggled by loud and incessant talk to smother, that it might not reach the ears of the broken-hearted mother until he had an opportunity to buy a paper and know if the news was true. On the arrival at the boat he hurried the shrouded figure in his charge to a secluded corner of the deck, where he hoped she might escape, both in sight and hearing, the excitement that was seething about her.

When he had found a seat in the crowded train for Mrs. Booth, he left her for a moment and bought a newspaper, and had time only to put it in her hand, and to say: "You will need now all your courage. The paper in your hand will tell you what, unhappily, we must all wish to hear. John Wilkes is dead"; and as he spoke the car slowly started, leaving Mr. Thompson only time to spring to the platform. On the moving train, surrounded by strangers, the poor mother sat alone in her misery, while every one about her, unconscious of her presence, was reading and talking, with burning indignation, of her son, the assassin of the President. Before the train had reached its journey's end, Mrs. Booth, with wonderful fortitude and self-restraint, had read the pitiful story of her misguided boy's wanderings, capture, and death. And alone in her wall of silence read — "Tell my mother that I died for my country."

CHAPTER VIII

THE Government had issued a proclamation that at Washington, on May 22 and 23, there would be a grand review of the army. This announcement was accepted by the country that the war was at an end; by the soldiers that their services were no longer needed in the field; by the officers and civil rulers that the armed resistance to the sundering of the United States had ceased, and that to the unhappy struggle of the preceding years "finis" would now be written.

Mr. Aldrich and his young fiancée were invited to come to Washington for this inspiring pageant, their host a colonel in the regular army, who had learned the business of war at West Point, and who was for the moment living outside the city in one of the fine old Southern mansions, whose owners, father and son, had joined the Confederates and died on the field, leaving in the old home a heart-broken wife and mother, and the two or three loyal slaves who still remained, protecting and shielding as much as possible the pale mourners whom they felt to be their charge.

Very impressive to the young girl was the arrival at the crowded station at Washington in the early

evening — the throngs of people, soldiers, civilians, women and children in the indescribable tumult and confusion of arriving and departing trains, the pandemonium; the coming of a handsome young aide-de-camp, with his tarnished shoulder-straps, detailed for escort duty; the pomp and circumstance of the four orderlies who accompanied him; the rapid drive over the long bridge; the rhythmical clatter of the orderlies' horses as they followed the carriage.

The last traces of color were fading from the sky as the handsome young officer led the way up the steps of a white porch, which the heavy bloom of a trumpet vine shaded. Inside the open door two sentries stood, resting on their rifles, and outside, away somewhere in the distance, a band was playing, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

There is still a very vivid memory of a dining-room in that old-time Southern mansion, and the dinner the first night of our arrival. The table set with a service of antique English glass; the china bearing the Spode mark; and over the mantel an oil painting of the grim face of Andrew Jackson, dressed in the regalia of a general, and looking down on us from his carved and gilt frame. The dinner was served by a gray-haired black servitor, whose careworn face was wrinkled and seared. And although the law declared he was no longer a slave, but a free man, the owner of himself, he wore still his visible chains — chains

stronger than iron or steel could forge — Love and Devotion to the two women left in his care, and who, were he slave or free, would still own him until Death severed the tie.

From the time of President Lincoln's death all insignia of rejoicing had been over at the Capital until the day of the grand review of the victorious army. But on that day the city was gaily festooned and garlanded with the National colors, floating flags, and martial music. All day long the Army of the Potomac marched down Pennsylvania Avenue passing the grandstand occupied by the President and his Cabinet and the commanding generals of the war. On the next day came the armies of the West — the men who had marched with Sherman to the sea — tramping they came, Custis, Sherman, and other heroes garlanded with flowers, cheers from the vast multitude of men and women ringing in their ears every step of the way — a splendid spectacle, the greatest military pageant in the history of America and one of the greatest in the history of the world. But despite the brilliant sunshine, the gay mass of colors, the excited crowds that everywhere blocked the streets, the rushing to and fro of officers and soldiers, the beating of drums, the resounding echo of the cavalry hurrying from post to post, there was the sadness that dominated every heart, and made of it a silent mourner for the Chief taken so

cruelly from his day of triumph. For our host's party there were seats reserved on the grandstand, very near the new President; and as general after general, troops after troops, passed and saluted, the wild enthusiasm and thunder of applause smothered and almost deadened the music of the bands, which with the torn and frayed battle-flags became to the mind as a set of bells tuned to each other — a pæan and a dirge.

The assassination of Lincoln was but a part of a treasonable conspiracy entered into by the instigators of that crime. The evil purpose had been to murder simultaneously the President, his Secretary of State, the Vice-President, and the Commander-in-Chief of the armies. The scheme was frustrated, although the attempt was made to keep the unholy covenant, and at the time of the grand review a military court was in session for the trial of the eight conspirators arrested.

The Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, had kindly given us a pass to this military tribunal and to Ford's Theatre, and had also detailed for our escort a young officer at whose magic touch all doors opened. Our first visit was to the theatre, which was strongly guarded by soldiers, both outside and inside. The stage was still set with all the *mise en scène*, as on that eventful evening of the President's death. In the box from behind the curtain that had shaded his chair I

picked up a play-bill that might have fallen from his hand. From the theatre we went to the small brick house across the street where the President was carried unconscious, and where he died. Lincoln's strong personality still left in that humble room the vague feeling of

> "A presence that eludes the eye,
> Some subtlety that seems to stay."

The military court was held in a small room in the old arsenal. The surroundings were in their gloomy and sombre shade well fitted for the recital of the grim tragedy. The glittering of the uniforms of the officers who composed the court made a sharp contrast with the wretched prisoners, who were lined up against the walls of the room with a guard upon each side of them.

Young Herold, a druggist's clerk who had joined John Wilkes Booth immediately after the assassination, and had been with him during the ten days that preceded their capture, was under the fire of cross-questionings as we entered the court-room. It was a very slight and boyish figure that fronted his stern judges, the face set and colorless like yellow wax, with freckles that seemed almost to illuminate the waxen surface. The brown eyes were in expression as a deer that had been wounded; the whole body and face vibrant with anxious fear, like an animal that has been trapped and sees no escape. One

turned away from it with a feeling that no mortal had the right to look at a soul so naked and unveiled.

At the end of the line sat Lewis Payne, whose attempt had been to murder William H. Seward, Secretary of State. In his face there was depicted neither anxiety nor interest. During the time we were in the court-room, Payne, who was sitting near the open window, watched the swaying of a tree, face and figure expressing indifference to all the transitory things of life — life which he seemed to have no further interest in. One could not but wonder, looking at him as he sat so undisturbed and motionless, what was the composition of his thought.

Mrs. Surratt sat more toward the centre of the group. She was rather a large woman, wearing a rusty black woollen dress, and most of the time held before her face a large palm-leaf fan. Of the other five prisoners who were charged with conspiracy and the murder of Lincoln, I have no very distinct remembrance, beyond the tragic vision of seeing them hand-cuffed and an officer standing on each side of a sitting figure.

We came out through a private door of the court-room which was in the second story of the building, and as we descended a spiral staircase set in grim gray stone a figure coming up the stairs for the moment blocked the way. It was Mr. Edwin Booth whom the Government had sent for; but happily

for him, he was not called upon to testify. Years later, when the excitement of war was over, the Government sent word to Mr. Booth of the place of burial of John Wilkes and gave the right of re-interment.

At the end of the trial of the conspirators, the judge-advocate, John A. Bingham, said:

"Whatever else may befall, I trust in God that in this, as in every other American Court, the rights of the whole people shall be respected, and that the Republic in this, its supreme hour of trial, will be true to itself and just to all, ready to protect the rights of the humblest, to redress every wrong, to avenge every crime, to vindicate the majesty of law, and to maintain inviolate the Constitution, whether assailed secretly or openly, or by hosts armed with gold, or armed with steel."

CHAPTER IX

AFTER the mustering-out of the million of soldiers who had bravely risked life and fortune to preserve the Union, and give freedom to the slave, slowly men returned again to the duties and interests that had preceded the Civil War. Wounds of body and spirit healed, and even summer itself became an accomplice.

> "Ah, with what delicate touches of her hand,
> With what sweet voice of bird and rivulet,
> And drowsy murmur of the rustling leaf,
> Would Nature soothe us, bidding us forget
> The awful crime of this distracted land,
> And all our heavy heritage of grief."

Of this year, Mr. Greenslet in his biography of Mr. Aldrich says:

"In the autumn of 1865 three events occurred which definitely marked that year as the true *annus mirabilis* of our poet's life: his collected poems were published in the authentic Ticknor & Fields Blue and Gold Series; he was established in a singularly pleasant editorial chair; and he was married.

"The summer had passed pleasantly for Aldrich, happy in his love and poetic labor. Part of the summer was spent in Portsmouth, and there Miss Woodman likewise came on a visit. How pleasant that was

THE OLD "NUTTER HOUSE"

no one can realize who has not guided a sympathetic sweetheart through the Happy Hunting Grounds of his boyhood."

It was during this visit to the old "Nutter House" that a letter came which was to prove so momentous in the lives of both. Of this letter Mr. Greenslet writes:

"It lies before me now as I write, a yellowing bit of paper with some black marks on it, a queer faded thing to have caused so much joyful excitement forty years ago:

"'DEAR ALDRICH, — We have decided to do "Every Saturday," and that T. B. A. is the man to edit it. Please meet me on Sunday at the St. Denis at as early an hour as convenient, — say nine o'clock, — and we will decide upon the details.

"'Yours truly,

"'J. R. OSGOOD.'

"The 'details' were arranged to the entire satisfaction of both parties, and it was decided that the paper should make its bow in Boston on the first of January, 1866. At the time, however, it was not precisely the conduct of the paper that was first in Aldrich's thoughts.... There was no delay, or elaborate preparation. He was married to Miss Woodman in New York on November 28, 1865. Bayard Taylor wrote a sonnet for the occasion — one of his best.

"TO T. B. A. AND L. W.

"Sad Autumn, drop thy weedy crown forlorn,
Put off thy cloak of cloud, thy scarf of mist,
And dress in gauzy gold and amethyst
A day benign, of sunniest influence born,
As may befit a Poet's marriage-morn!
Give buds another dream, another tryst
To loving hearts, and on lips unkissed
Betrothal-kisses, laughing Spring to scorn!
Yet, if unfriendly thou, with sullen skies,
Bleak rains, or moaning winds, dost menace wrong,
Here art thou foiled: a bridal sun shall rise,
And bridal emblems unto these belong:
Round her the sunshine of her beauty lies,
And breathes round him the spring-time of his song!"

On November 27 Mr. Aldrich wrote to his sweetheart: "This is the last letter I shall probably write to Miss Lilian Woodman. I pray God's blessing on her now and forever."

A series of impressions, pictures not yet sorted out by memory, linger of those early, blithesome days in Boston, when "Life was in its spring." Mr. Greenslet has so graphically described the environment of those happy honeymoon months that again I quote from his pages:

"It was not long before the Aldriches found themselves sharing the communities of friendship with the elder circle. Fields and his poet-wife took them under a friendly wing, and it was in their long drawing-room in Charles Street, a rich treasury of lettered

memories, whose windows now look somewhat sadly out upon the river, and the sunset, that they first came to terms of intimacy with Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Emerson. Our poet's charming personal presence and ready wit soon made him a favorite with the elder men, and the acquaintance thus begun speedily ripened into affectionate friendship.

" Five minutes' walk from Hancock Street, in the building at 124 Tremont Street, at the corner of Hamilton Place, overlooking the Common, were the offices of Ticknor & Fields, and there in a commodious room, with bookshelves and an open fire, Aldrich applied himself to the editing of 'Every Saturday,' an eclectic weekly supposed to carry the best of foreign periodical literature."

Soon after Mr. Aldrich was so comfortably seated in this ideal editor's chair, another pilgrim, " with staff and sandal shoon," came to share in the new life, rich in its enchanted vista of prosperity and joy — Mr. William Dean Howells — as assistant editor of the " Atlantic Monthly," sharing the duties of editorship with Mr. Fields. In his " Literary Friends and Acquaintance," Mr. Howells has written of their first meeting:

" The publishing house which so long embodied New England literature was already attempting enterprises out of the line of its traditions, and one of these had brought Mr. T. B. Aldrich a few weeks

before I arrived upon the scene. Mr. Aldrich was the editor of 'Every Saturday,' when I came to be assistant editor of the 'Atlantic Monthly.' We were of nearly the same age, but he had a distinct and distinguished priority of reputation, in so much that in my Western remoteness I had always ranged him with such elders and betters of mine as Holmes and Lowell, and never imagined him the blond slight youth I found him, with every imaginable charm of contemporaneity."

The two young authors were thrown much together, and became at once the warmest of friends. Mr. Howells had a charming personality, happy and gay, in love with literature and all that pertained to it. His Pegasus, being well broken to harness, daily, at a regular hour, went willingly into his shafts and soberly trotted away his allotted hours, to the envy and despair of Mr. Aldrich. *His* Pegasus, being most unruly, always refused to work when bidden, curveting and rearing, kicking over the traces, and usually ending by galloping over the hills and far away.

Mr. Howells received the appointment of Consul to Venice when he was twenty-four years old, holding it from 1861 to 1865. The four years in Italy were full of interest to his young bride and himself. They had established themselves at the Casa Faliero on the Grand Canal, and there the "Sketches of Vene-

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

tian Life" was written, and offered to the "Atlantic" — to be declined with thanks.

Very amusing was Mrs. Howells's description of the difficulties they experienced in achieving the marriage ceremony, and the ludicrously disappointing failures met with before it was accomplished.

Mr. Howells could not leave his consulship duties for the length of time it would take for the fast ships of that time to cross the ocean. (Eleven days.) It was decided that Miss Mead and her brother would go to Liverpool, Mr. Howells to meet them there on the arrival of the steamer. They would go at once to the house of a minister and be married, and then would slowly take their joyous wedding journey to Venice. But fate remorselessly decreed otherwise.

Miss Mead's wedding and "go-away-gown" was combined in one, a simple brown dress and coat, with the close little bonnet with its one bridal rose; her new gloves were a shade lighter than her dress, and loose, that she might easily slip and free the finger for the wedding ring. As the steamer dropped anchor in the Mersey, and her lover from the approaching tender waved his greeting, there was a little catch in her throat with the knowledge how imminent was the hour when the irrevocable words would be spoken — the vows taken that would end only with death. When the excitement of the meeting had subsided a little, Mr. Howells said he had

been disappointed in procuring a marriage license; the law in Liverpool made a residence of some days or weeks obligatory before a marriage could be legalized; consequently they must journey up to London where the technical difficulties would be simplified. To London they gaily went, but met there with no better success. Like "Japhet in Search of his Father" they went on from city to city, from country to country, until after four or five wearisome days they arrived somewhere, where after sore tribulations the quest ended, and the marriage was solemnized. Mrs. Howells, between a smile and a tear, said, "The new gloves I had so proudly put on as we left the ship were all out at the fingers, and my spirit was like my gloves, torn and frayed at the edges."

Boston in the sixties had the reputation, deserved or otherwise, of being puritanical and rather provincial in its attitude toward strangers. But to the four young persons who had sought shelter within the fold the advice Mr. Ward McAllister gave to one of the pilgrims he met at Mrs. Howe's, "To swear she had an ancestor buried on Boston Common, that all doors might be opened to her," did not need to be taken to insure a kindly welcome to the inner shrines. Invitations to dinner and to evening parties were constantly coming to both houses: "The pleasure of your company to meet Mr. and

Mrs. Howells": "The pleasure of your company to meet Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich"; until the recipients of these attentions with hysterical laughter and almost tears confessed the relief it would be to go somewhere — anywhere, where they would never hear or see each other again.

In that happy first winter, one episode is always a delightful memory: the meeting of Mr. Justin Winsor and the friendship that followed.

Very shortly after Mr. Aldrich's marriage an appreciative criticism of one of his poems was published in a New York paper, "The Round Table." Mr. Aldrich wrote a note of thanks to the writer, who answered it by saying that he lived in Boston, and should give himself the pleasure of calling. The note was soon followed by the promised visit.

The impression of that evening is very clear, a face and figure sharply outlined in memory. A tall man, rather stout, who was in truth but thirty-four years old, looking, however, much older; quiet in manner, very bookish in talk. He was dressed in black, the seams of his coat rather shiny. Mr. Winsor spoke of a life he was writing of David Garrick, and said that unfortunately he had collected such a mass of material of that time that the task of sifting it seemed hopelessly discouraging. When the door finally closed upon the departing guest, the verdict was: how much he seemed to enjoy his evening; evi-

dently a recluse, shut away from the world of men and women; seeing life only through other eyes and written pages. Later, the shining seams were spoken of, and Mr. Aldrich, always eager to be of assistance, said, "I might give him some translations to do for 'Every Saturday' from the French and German magazines. The pay would not be much, but it would be something."

The next day the offer was made and accepted with apparent gratitude. Mr. Winsor, in bringing the first translation to the office of "Every Saturday," said "that he would be much pleased if the Editor and his wife would name a day when they would be at leisure for a drive, and under his guidance learn the points of interest in their new city." Mr. Aldrich made a conventional excuse and the subject was dropped, to be again resumed when the next article was brought to the editorial chair. After declining several times, it seemed more unkind to refuse than to accept the invitation. With great reluctance a day was set, and imagination pictured a one-horse shay, the small sum of money made by the French and German translations ground into dust under its wheels, and the two unwilling beneficiaries powerless to avert the unnecessary expenditure. There was a grave conference on the matter of dress for the occasion, and it was decreed that the usual street dress was much too modish and *chic* — that a cos-

tume more unobtrusive would be in better taste. At the appointed hour a slight figure in a simple brown woollen dress and coat looking from the window saw a carriage stop at the door. A handsome span of horses, coachman in livery, a carriage perfect in its appointments, and from its open door stepped, with the nonchalant air of possession, the gentleman of the translations!

Through the shadowy mist of the receding years the memory of the friendship and the little drama enacted nearly every day through that first winter in Boston is very clear and perfect; the stage set in one scene: a large square room, old-fashioned and wainscoted — a glowing open fire, books and pictures, and always a vase of flowers. With very few exceptions during those wintry days, at four o'clock there would be heard a light tap at the door, and the questioning hesitation of a voice asking, "Shall I disturb you if I come for a half-hour's chat and a seat at your fireside?" The *dramatis personæ* were but two in this little play: A young girl who knew little of book-lore, and a man who had been a student at Heidelberg and Paris; a classmate of President Eliot, John Quincy Adams, and Professor A. S. Hill, J. M. Pierce, and other equally well-known scholars — a man of unusual learning, of tenacious memory, and with an intimate knowledge of books and all that relates to them most amazing.

The programme of the hour was ever the same. The largest and easiest chair drawn to the fire, and while the tea was brewing the long fork held and toasted the bread. Sometimes there was pleasant talk, and sometimes long silence, but always the two were the most companionable of comrades. Although Mr. Winsor could in truth be named a veritable bookworm — versed in all literature, a man of letters in the fullest sense of the word — in this hour books were rarely talked of. Mr. David Garrick was often present, real and tangible as Hamlet's ghost, he appeared and disappeared, and came again, often making a third in many a cheerful duet.

In the following year there was a vacancy in the board of trustees of the Boston Public Library, and it was the happy fortune of Mr. Winsor's young friend to speak of him in this connection to a man high up in the city's affairs. The result was the authority given to ask Mr. Winsor whether, if a place was offered to him, he would accept it, and with his affirmative answer he unconsciously entered on his great career.

Years afterwards, at a congress of librarians in a notable address, Mr. Winsor told how a door held open to him by the hand of a young woman friend had given him entrance to a new world — his heart's desire.

Mr. Winsor was librarian in succession to the Bos-

ton Public Library and Harvard University. In the radical change of the administrations of all great libraries he was a pioneer, and future organizers will have to begin by accepting all of Mr. Winsor's work as a foundation.

With the broader sphere and active duties of his new position he could no longer be a recluse — a student living in the shadow of his library, with its carven shelves filled with books from floor to ceiling, where day after day he had passed his silent hours. In place of the life that now lay behind him, "to a very large number of men he gave himself and his stores of knowledge, with a completeness of interest in their problems and in themselves, and a power of detachment from his own concerns, which made them turn to him as to no other adviser." With us, however, with the passing of this year the intimate bonds of his friendship seemed loosened. When our Lares and Penates were transferred to the new home, we saw Mr. Winsor but seldom. He came two or three times to the house, but was silent and *distrait*. After a serious illness of his young friend, he sent her a huge box of roses with an affectionate note, and from that time there was ever silence.

"Was it something said,
Something done,
Vexed him? Was it touch of hand,
Turn of head?"

CHAPTER X

IN the "Life" of Mr. Aldrich his biographer says: "Despite the pleasantness of the life at Hancock Street, the Aldriches were from the first looking about for a still more homelike shelter. Finally in December, 1866, Aldrich purchased the quaint little house 84 Pinckney Street, two thirds the way down toward the bay where the lazy Charles rests after its circuitous course through the Cambridge marshes, and gave it to Mrs. Aldrich for his remembrance on the second Christmas of their life together. They furnished it at their leisure during the winter and settled there in the spring of 1867. Of the characteristic charm of this their first home there are many records. The compact little house soon became celebrated as the happy home of a happy poet."

It was in the autumn of this year that Boston had the great excitement of welcoming Mr. Dickens on his second visit to America. For several years Mr. Fields had been persistent in his efforts to induce Mr. Dickens to make the visit; but it was not until this time that the suggestion received any encouragement. In the early spring Mr. Dickens wrote to Mr. Fields the following letter:

"Your letter is an excessively difficult one to

answer, because I really do not know that any sum of money that could be laid down would induce me to cross the Atlantic to read. Nor do I think it likely that any one on your side of the great water can be prepared to understand the state of the case. For example, I am now just finishing a series of thirty readings. The crowds attending them have been so astounding, and the relish for them has so far outgone all previous experience, that if I were to set myself the task, 'I will make such or such a sum of money by devoting myself to readings for a certain time,' I should have to go no further than Bond Street or Regent Street, to have it secured to me in a day. Therefore, if a specific offer and a very large one, indeed, were made to me from America, I should naturally ask myself, 'Why go through this wear and tear, merely to pluck fruit that grows on every bough at home?' It is a delightful sensation to move a new people; but I have but to go to Paris, and I find the brightest people in the world quite ready for me. I say thus much in a sort of desperate endeavor to explain myself to you. I can put no price upon fifty readings in America, because I do not know that any possible price could pay me for them. And I really cannot say to any one disposed toward the enterprise, 'Tempt me,' because I have too strong a misgiving that he cannot in the nature of things do it.

"This is the plain truth. If any distinct proposal be submitted to me I will give it a distinct answer. But the chances are a round thousand to one that the answer will be no, therefore I feel bound to make the declaration beforehand."

In the summer, however, things looked more promising; the second letter bringing more assurance:

"I am trying hard so to free myself as to be able to come over to read this next winter!"

On the 21st of August he writes: "I begin to think 'nautically' that I 'Head westward.'" And soon after that the date was set for sailing.

It was on a blustering evening in November that Mr. Dickens arrived in Boston Harbor. A few of his friends steamed down in the Custom-House boat to welcome him. It was pitch dark before the Cuba ran alongside. Mr. Dickens's cheery voice was heard welcoming Mr. Fields before there was time to distinguish him on the steamer. He looked like a bundle of animated wraps, and was in most exuberant spirits; the news of the extraordinary sale of the tickets to his readings having been carried to him by the pilot twenty miles out. Mr. Fields, having heard that a crowd had assembled in East Boston and was waiting the arrival of the steamer, decided to take his guest in the tug to Long Wharf where carriages were in waiting, and very shortly Mr. Dickens was

well ensconced at the Parker House, sitting down to dinner with a half-dozen friends, quite prepared, he said, "to give the first reading in America that night if desirable."

There had been the greatest excitement over the sale of the tickets for the readings. A box office was established at Ticknor & Fields', and a rule made that only four tickets would be sold to one person. A queue was formed twenty-four hours before the sale began, and the stir and commotion for places in the line were without precedent heretofore in the city. As Mr. Aldrich was doing editorial work for Ticknor & Fields, and that house being the headquarters of literary Boston, the air was full of Dickens — we breathed it. The struggles to get the best seats, the triumph with which, after much hustling, they were secured, linger most pleasantly in my memory, especially our own little chuckles — we being behind the scenes, as it were, and sure of our places.

Boston has changed much since the days when she dined at two o'clock, asked her more formal friends to tea at six, and made the stranger within her gates the all-absorbing topic. Now we talk of balls, dinners, dances, and our literary guest closes his book and goes to the opera or the vaudeville with us.

What memories unfold themselves to my vision of that night, December 2, 1867; the night of the

first appearance of Mr. Dickens in the Tremont Temple! Again I am conscious of the expectant hush as Mr. Dickens appears, book in hand, white *boutonnière* in buttonhole. With quick, elastic steps he takes his place. The whole audience spring to their feet, while round after round of applause, cheer after cheer, shout after shout of welcome greet him. On the stage is a simple device, designed by Mr. Dickens, looking like a reading-desk, with a light so arranged as to illuminate the reader's face; behind it stands a long, dark, purplish screen. With a magician's touch the simple desk transforms itself, supple to the master's will — at one time a kind of pulpit with brass rail, the witness box; next the enclosed seats where the jurymen sit; then a numerous muster of gentlemen in wigs, the barristers' seats; then it became the table for Mr. Justice Stareleigh, "who put his little legs underneath it and his little three-cornered hat upon it; and when Mr. Justice Stareleigh had done this, all you could see of him was two queer little eyes, one broad pink face, and somewhere about half of a big and very comical-looking wig. The officer on the floor of the court called out, 'Silence!' in a commanding tone, and the great case of Bardwell and Pickwick began," holding the listeners still and motionless until the foreman brought in the verdict of "Guilty" and fined the defendant seven hundred and fifty pounds.

Then Sam Weller's father touched him on the shoulder and, with a mournful expression, said, "'O, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there a alleybi!'" With this the great audience shouted with laughter, and the wild applause began again with gathered volume, until even the walls of Tremont Temple itself seemed to echo and vibrate as a pendulum disturbed from rest and swinging to and fro.

Never to be forgotten is the accent and modulation of Mr. Dickens's voice as he spoke the words: "Marley was dead to begin with." The great audience was held in breathless silence as the ghost and Scrooge and the jocund travellers, the phantom, the spirits, went and came through the pages of the "Christmas Carol"; until little Tiny Tim observed, "God bless us, every one!" And with these words, the wonderful evening was over.

Walking home through the still wintry air, Mr. Aldrich spoke of a letter he had seen written to Professor Felton when the book was first published, showing what the writing of the book had meant to Mr. Dickens:

"In the parcel you will find a Christmas Carol in prose, being a short story of Christmas by Charles Dickens, over which Christmas Carol Charles Dickens wept and laughed and wept again, and excited himself in the most extraordinary manner in the composition, and thinking whereof he walked

about the black streets of London fifteen and twenty miles many a night."

So distinct is the memory of the first time Mr. Dickens came to our house in Pinckney Street that I even see the figure in the carpet on which he stood. Mrs. Hawthorne had named this small house "Mrs. Aldrich's workbox." It was mostly composed of white muslin and pink ribbons, white muslin and blue ribbons, all excepting Mr. Aldrich's study, which Mr. Howells, to our great discomfiture, always spoke of as "Aldrich's boudoir"; as he always spoke of his own study as his workshop, our feelings were hurt and bitter. We said to each other it was nothing but sheer envy, and endeavored in this way to soothe the wound.

If the Sultan of Zanzibar, the Czar of all Russia, the Grand Mogul of India, and all the crowned heads of Europe combined should knock at our door, it would not throw the entire household into such a frenzy and flutter as that simple card did, with its magic name, "Mr. Charles Dickens."

I well remember the quick beating of my heart as I descended the stairs to the "boudoir," where I found Mr. Dickens seated in the easiest chair in the bay window. A rather short, slight figure, so he seemed to me then, without the manner that stamps the caste of "Vere de Vere." He was dressed — I think dressed is the right word — in a very light, so

light that I don't know how to describe it — I can almost say soiled white color — top coat. It was wide and short, and stood out like a skirt, the collar of a much darker shade of velvet. His waistcoat was velvet of another shade of brown, with brilliant red indentations; his watch chain was buttoned into the centre button of his waistcoat, and then it divided itself. I found myself saying, "How do you do," and wondering, if the watch was in one pocket, what was at the other end of the chain in the other pocket, and was tempted to ask him the time, in the hope that he might make a mistake and bring out the other thing. I don't remember what he wore on his feet, and I don't know the plaid of his trousers, but I rather think it was a black-and-white check — what the Englishman calls "pepper and salt." I don't remember any one topic of conversation on that first visit, but I remember well the laughter and good cheer; the charming way in which the guest made these two young people feel that to him they really were persons of consequence and were so regarded by this prince of strangers who tarried within their gates.

On our first Thanksgiving in this box of a house, Mr. Fields by chance came in. It was a cold day and snowing, which made the house, in contrast to the "biting and nipping air" outside, seem more gay and cheerful with the open fires, flowers, and the

table set for dinner with the wedding presents of silver and glass. Mr. Fields said, "Oh, Dickens has got to come and see this!" So off he went to bring him.

In those happy days my mainstay and dependence was an austere lady who consented to live with us for the modest sum of five dollars per week, which would include the services of herself and daughter. It is true that this daughter had lived in this great world of ours but six years; but Mrs. Sterling felt that Lizzie was a sufficient grown-up to answer the doorbell, wait at the table, and, as Mrs. Sterling said, "serve it all," if she, Mrs. Sterling, "waited in the pantry to lift the heavy dishes to and fro from the table." Lizzie was also an accomplished duster, and could run up and down stairs on all kinds of errands, and also knew cause and effect, as I remember her assuring me one day, when the fire bells rang, "that she supposed some one had been fiddling with kerosene."

Added to all these accomplishments, Lizzie was a composite portrait of all the old Dutch masters, in her mouse-colored dress reaching almost to the ground; a long white tire with full bishop sleeves, hair braided on each side of her brow, and tied with the same mouse-colored ribbon in a prim bow.

Mr. Fields soon returned with his distinguished guest, who was, I remember, to dine with Mr. Long-

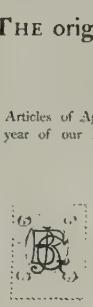
THE GREAT INTERNAT

OF FEBRU

THE origin of this highly exciting and important event cannot be

THE

Articles of Agreement entered into at Baltimore, in the United States of America, this Third day of February, the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, between GEORGE DOLBY, British Subject, *a.* the Man of Ross, and JAMES RIDLEY OSGOOD, American Citizen, *alias* the Boston Bantam.



Whereas, some Bounce having arisen between the above men in reference to feat- pedestrianism and agility, they have agreed to settle their differences and prove who is better man, by means of a walking-match for two hats a side and the glory of their re- tive countries; and whereas they agree that the said match shall come off, whatsoever weather, on the Mill Dam road outside Boston on Saturday, the Twenty-ninth day of present month; and whereas they agree that the personal attendants on themselves dur the whole walk, and also the umpires and starters and declarers of victory in the match be JAMES T. FIELDS of Boston, known in sporting circles as Massachusetts Jemmy, and CHA DICKENS of Falstaff's Gad's Hill, whose surprising performances (without the least variation that truly national instrument, the American Catarrh, have won for him the well-merited of The Gad's Hill Gasper.

Now, these are to be the articles of the match:—

1. The men are to be started, on the day appointed, by Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper.

2. Jemmy and The Gasper are, on some previous day, to walk out at the rate of not less than four miles an h by the Gasper's watch, for one hour and a half. At the expiration of that one hour and a half, they are to carefu note the place at which they halt. On the match's coming off, they are, to station themselves in the middle of road, at that precise point, and the men (keeping clear of them and of each other) are to turn round them, shoulder inward, and walk back to the starting-point. The man declared by them to pass the starting-point firs to be the victor and the winner of the match.

3. No jostling or fouling allowed.

4. All cautions or orders issued to the men by the umpires, starters, and declarers of victory, to be considered final and admitting of no appeal.

THE SPORT

THE MEN.

THE Boston Bantam (*alias* Bright Chanticleer) is a young bird, though too old to be caught with chaff. He com of a thorough game breed and has a clear though modest crow. He pulls down the scale at ten stone and a and add a pound or two. His previous performances in the Pedestrian line have not been numerous. He achieved a neat little match against time in two left boots at Philadelphia; but this must be considered a pedestrian eccentricity, and cannot be accepted by the rigid chronicler as high art. The old mower with scythe and hour-glass has not yet laid his mawley heavily on the Bantam's frontispiece, but he has had a grip at Bantam's top feathers, and in plucking out a handful was very near making him like the great Napoleon Bonap (with the exception of the victualling-department), when the ancient one found himself too much occupied to c out the idea, and gave it up. The Man of Ross (*alias* old Alick Pope, *alias* Allourpraiseswhyshouldlords, &c.) thought and a half too fleshy, and, if he accidentally sat down upon his baby, would do it to the tune of fourt stone. This popular Codger is of the rubicund and jovial sort, and has long been known as a piscatorial pedest on the banks of the Wye. But Izaak Walton had n't Pace,—look at his book and you 'll find it slow,—and w that article comes in question, the fishing-rod may prove to some of his disciples a rod in pickle. Howbeit, Man of Ross is a Lively Ambler and has a smart stride of his own.

THE TRAINING.

If Brandy Cocktails could have brought both men up to the post in tip-top feather, their condition would H left nothing to be desired. But both might have had more daily practice in the poetry of motion. Their breathi were confined to an occasional Baltimore burst under the guidance of the Gasper, and to an amicable toddle betw themselves at Washington.

THE COURSE.

Six miles and a half, good measure, from the first tree on the Mill Dam road, lies the little village (with no refri ments in it but five oranges and a bottle of blacking) of Newton Centre. Here, Massachusetts Jemmy and the Ga had established the turning-point. The road comprehended every variety of inconvenience to test the mettle of men, and nearly the whole of it was covered with snow.

THE START

was effected beautifully. The men, taking their stand in exact line at the starting-post, the first tree aforesaid, recei from The Gasper the warning, "Are you ready?" and then the signal, "One, two, three, Go!" They got a exactly together, and at a spinning speed, waited on by Massachusetts Jemmy and The Gasper.

NAL WALKING-MATCH

9, 1868.

tated than in the articles of agreement subscribed by the parties.

LES.

A sporting narrative of the match to be written by The Gasper within one week after its coming off, and me to be duly printed (at the expense of the subscribers to these articles) on a broadside. The said broad- be framed and glazed, and one copy of the same to be carefully preserved by each of the subscribers to articles.

The men to show on the evening of the day of walking, at six o'clock precisely, at the Parker House, , when and where a dinner will be given them by The Gasper. The Gasper to occupy the chair, faced by chusetts Jemmy. The latter promptly and formally to invite, as soon as may be after the date of these presents, llowing Guests to honor the said dinner with their presence: that is to say:—Mistress Annie Fields, Mr. s Eliot Norton and Mrs. Norton, Professor James Russell Lowell and Mrs. Lowell and Miss Lowell, Doctor Wendell Holmes and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Howard Malcom Ticknor and Mrs. Ticknor, Mr. Aldrich and Mrs. lh, Mr. Schlesinger, and an obscure poet named Longfellow (if discoverable) and Miss Longfellow.

low. Lastly. In token of their accepting the trusts and offices by these articles conferred upon them, these s—are solemnly and formally signed by Massachusetts Jemmy and by the Gad's Hill Gasper, as well as by the themselves.

Signed by the Man of Ross, otherwise

Signed by the Boston Bantam, otherwise James R. Osgood

Signed by Massachusetts Jemmy, otherwise James T. Fields

Signed by The Gad's Hill Gasper, otherwise

Witness to the signatures.

ARRATIVE.

THE RACE.

h the teeth of an intensely cold and bitter wind before which the snow flew fast and furious across the road from to left. The Bantam slightly led. But The Man responded to the challenge and soon breasted him. For the hree miles, each led by a yard or so alternately; but the walking was very even. On four miles being called e Gasper, the men were side by side; and then ensued one of the best periods of the race, the same splitting sing held by both, through a heavy snow-wreath and up a dragging hill. At this point it was anybody's game, ar on Rossius and two half-dollars on the member of the feathery tribe. When five miles were called, the were still shoulder to shoulder. At about six miles, the Gasper put on a tremendous spirt to leave the men and establish himself as the turning-point at the entrance of the village. He afterwards declared that he d a mental knock-downer, on taking his station and facing about, to find Bright Chanticleer close in upon him, Rossius steaming up like a Locomotive. The Bantam rounded first; Rossius rounded-wide; and from that nt the Bantam steadily shot ahead. Though both were breathed at the turn, the Bantam quickly got his s into obedient condition, and blew away like an orderly Blacksmith in full work. The forcing-pumps of Rossius e proved themselves tough and true, and warranted first-rate, but he fell off in pace; whereas the Bantam pegged with his little drum-sticks, as if he saw his wives and a peck of barley waiting for him at the family perch. ually gaining upon him of Ross, Chanticleer gradually drew ahead within a very few yards of half a mile, finally the whole distance in two hours and forty-eight minutes. Ross had ceased to compete, three miles short of the g-post, but bravely walked it out, and came in seven minutes later.

REMARKS.

he difficulties under which this plucky match was walked can only be appreciated by those who were on the l. To the excessive rigour of the icy blast, and the depth and state of the snow, must be added the constant ing of the latter into the air and into the eyes of the men, while heads of hair, beards, eyelashes, and eye- were frozen into icicles. To breathe at all, in such a rarefied and disturbed atmosphere, was not easy; but to e up to the required mark was genuine, slogging, ding-dong, hard labor. That both competitors were game to ckbone, doing what they did under such conditions, was evident to all: but, to his gameness, the courageous n added unexpected endurance, and (like the sailor's watch that did three hours to the cathedral clock's one) cted powers of going when wound up. The knowing eye could not fail to detect considerable disparity between ls; Chanticleer being, as Mrs. Cratchit said of Tiny Tim, "very light to carry," and Rossius promising fair to the rotundity of the Anonymous Cove in the epigram:

> "And when he walks the streets the saviours cry,
> 'God bless you, sir!' and lay their rammers by."

fellow that day. After a pleasant chat in the library, Mr. Dickens turned to me saying, "Now I want to see the little maid. I have heard all about her." So I went on the quest; and soon the demure little Dutch picture walked in with her silver tray, decanter, and wine-glass. Going up to Mr. Dickens she said, with her alluring lisp, "If you please, sir, will you take a glass of wine and a biscuit?" Mr. Dickens poured out his glass of wine, and with a courtly bow to us, and a lower one to the little maid, drank to our health and happiness; and when the little maid departed put his head on the cushion of his chair and laughed and laughed. Then turning to me he said, "Now I want to see this wonderful house from top to bottom, from cellar to attic." We showed it to him with honest and possessive pride, and when his visit was over he said, in leaving, that nothing in our country had interested him more. We have wondered since if, in telling of his visit to others, he did not say that nothing in our country had amused him more.

The next play on our happy stage of life was the "walking match" and the dinner Mr. Dickens gave to the victorious champion.

Mr. Fields says, in his "Yesterdays with Authors," that it was in Baltimore that Mr. Dickens conceived his idea of a walking match between Mr. Osgood and Mr. Dolby, and that he went into this

matter with as much earnest directness as if he were planning a new novel.

The articles of this joyous joke were drawn up and sent to the house of Ticknor & Fields with as much circumstance and official dignity as if they were papers relating to the making of a new president.

When this great international battle was over, and America had won, came the brilliant dinner at the Parker House.[1] Impressed on my memory for all time will be the picture of that night: a long table with its beautiful arrangement of flowers arranged by Mr. Dickens himself, and so designed that at the end of the feast they easily disintegrated, giving each woman a lovely *bouquet de corsage*. The dinner place cards were an innovation new to Boston. Mine was a gay little colored picture of a table laid for two, and the bridegroom (for I am sure it was a bridal party) with uplifted glass drinking a benediction to his bride.

There were no set speeches that night, as indeed there need not be with that company; such wit and

[1] "Distinguished Company.

"Charles Dickens to preside and James T. Fields to be seated opposite. Mrs. Annie Fields, Charles Eliot Norton and Mrs. Norton, Prof. James Russell Lowell and Mrs. Lowell, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Howard Malcolm Ticknor and Mrs. Ticknor, Mr. Aldrich and Mrs. Aldrich, Mr. Schlesinger, and an obscure poet named Longfellow (if discoverable) and Miss Longfellow."

laughter that made even the sparkle of the champagne seem dull and lifeless. The host at the head of his table was the incarnation of joy on a cruise of pleasure. Every fibre of his body was unrestrained and alert with good-fellowship, so that even the youngest and shyest guest, who had nothing to contribute to such a company but her youth and appreciation, forgot to be self-conscious.

A few weeks after the memorable visit of Mr. Dickens, the composite little Dutch picture appeared in the "boudoir" bringing with her a tiny silver tray on which lay a visiting card, "Mr. Henry W. Longfellow." The lisping voice made haste to say, "I said the Master and Mistress was home. I askeded him into the dining-room and I told him to set down."

Mr. Longfellow at this time had passed his sixtieth birthday. The awful chasm which, without the slightest warning, had opened at his feet in the tragedy of his wife's death had made him look much older than his years could count. Time never assuaged the wound of that bereavement. He spoke or wrote of it only in the fewest words. Once in writing to Mr. Curtis he said, "I am utterly wretched and overwhelmed; to the eyes of others outwardly calm, but inwardly bleeding to death." The spiritual beauty of Mr. Longfellow's expression, the dignity and gentleness of his manner, his smile of peculiar

sweetness, all had great charm, and made him seem the ideal poet.

The distinguished guest was soon placed in the easiest chair in the study, his hostess vainly endeavoring to appear at ease, and to hide as much as possible her sense of the high honor paid by this visit, which to her was much the same as it would be to the English subject should the King, without retinue or warning, depart from his palace to visit a simple gentry of his kingdom. After a half-hour's friendly chat of books and men, Mr. Longfellow said: "May I tell you how I am impressed with the atmosphere of home and cheer you have given to this little room? Its crimson walls, the flowers, the crowded shelves of books, all tell their story of the fortunate, the happy day, when a new household found its place among the innumerable homes of earth." Then, turning to his hostess, he said: "I should so much like if you would show me all of this small house. Mr. Dickens told me of its charm." With shy pride we took our guest from room to room, and when we came to our bedroom with its blue chintz hangings Mr. Longfellow said that all the bluebirds printed on them should know it was a poet's home and sing to him their sweetest melodies both day and night.

When the short tour of the house was over, lingering a moment at the dining-room door Mr. Longfellow said: "Ah, Mr. Aldrich, it will not always be

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

June 6. 1874. Henry W. Longfellow.

LONGFELLOW IN HIS STUDY

the same round table for two. By and by it will extend itself, and about it will cluster little faces, royal guests, drumming on the table with their spoons. And then, as the years go by, one by one they will take flight to build nests of their own. The round table will again recede until it is set for two and you and Mrs. Aldrich will be alone. This is the story of life, the pathetic poem of the fireside. Make an idyl of it; I give the idea to you." Mr. Aldrich did not use the *motif*, and Mr. Longfellow himself later wrote the poem "The Hanging of the Crane," for which poem Mr. Bonner paid him three thousand dollars for the right to publish it in his paper. Thus the little visit, which Mr. Longfellow in his kindness made, brought for him a dual reward — money and fame, and a larger asset, the pleasure and matronly pride it gave its young recipient.

This visit was soon followed by an invitation to dine at Craigie House. As our carriage stopped at the gate our host appeared at the open door, and coming down the long walk with courtly grace gave his arm to his young guest. The picture of the scene is indelible: the tender grace of the dying day; the lilacs just in bloom; the green of the grass; and a poet, bareheaded, with whitening hair, standing in the twilight.

CHAPTER XI

"The Summer comes and the Summer goes;
Wild-flowers are fringing the dusty lanes,
The swallows go darting through fragrant rains,
Then, all of a sudden — it snows.

"Dear Heart, our lives so happily flow,
So lightly we heed the flying hours,
We only know Winter is gone — by the flowers.
We only know Winter is come — by the snow."

FOR the first summers the fairyland of the idyllic days of the honeymoon of marriage was the "Old Town by the Sea," where Mr. Aldrich was born and where his grandfather and mother still lived in the "Nutter House," which was then, and is still, a fine example of the simple, dignified home of a quiet New England town almost a century ago.

It was in the summer of 1869 that Mr. Aldrich wrote the story that was told to him there — told to him by the "Nutter House" itself. The happy days of his boyhood spoke to him from every timber of that old home. There was not an inch in the house or a spot in the garden that did not have its story to tell. "It all came to me out of the past, the light and life of the Nutter House when I was a boy at Rivermouth."

The house stands on a narrow street at the foot of

which is the Piscataqua River. But the "Nutter House" and its surroundings are described so delightfully in "The Story of a Bad Boy" that the next few paragraphs shall be given to the reader by Tom Bailey himself:

"Few ships come to Rivermouth now. Commerce drifted into other ports. The phantom fleet sailed off one day and never came back again. The crazy old warehouses are empty; and barnacles and eel-grass cling to the piles of the crumbling wharves, where the sunshine lies lovingly, bringing out the faint spicy odor that haunts the place — the ghost of the old dead West India trade.

"The house abutted directly on the street; the granite doorstep was almost flush with the sidewalk, and the huge old-fashioned brass knocker extended itself in a kind of grim appeal to everybody. It seemed to possess strange fascinations for all seafaring folk; and when there was a man-of-war in port, the rat-tat of that knocker would frequently startle the quiet neighborhood long after midnight.

"Imagine a low-studded structure, with a wide hall running through the middle. At your right hand, as you enter, stands a tall mahogany clock, looking like an Egyptian mummy set up on end. On each side of the hall are doors opening into rooms wainscoted, with wood carvings about the mantelpieces and cornices.

"There are neither grates nor stoves in the quaint chambers, but splendid open chimney-places, with room enough for the corpulent back-log to turn over comfortably on the polished andirons. The door on the left as one enters is the best room. The walls are covered with pictured paper, representing landscapes and sea-views — for example, this enlivening figure is repeated all over the room: A group of English peasants wearing Italian hats are dancing on a lawn that abruptly resolves itself into a sea-beach, upon which stands a flabby fisherman (nationality unknown), quietly hauling in what appears to be a small whale, and totally regardless of the dreadful naval combat going on just beyond the end of his fishing-rod. On the other side of the ships is the mainland again, with the same peasants dancing.

"It is Sunday morning. I should premise by saying that the deep gloom which settled over everything set in like a heavy fog early on Saturday evening.

"Our parlor is by no means thrown open every day. It is open this June morning, and is pervaded by a strong smell of centre-table. The furniture of the room, and the little China ornaments on the mantelpiece, have a constrained, unfamiliar look. My grandfather sits in a mahogany chair, reading a large Bible covered with green baize. Miss Abigail occupies one end of the sofa, and has her hands

HALL AND STAIRWAY IN THE "NUTTER HOUSE"

crossed stiffly in her lap. I sit in the corner, crushed. Robinson Crusoe and Gil Blas are in close confinement. Baron Trenck, who managed to escape from the fortress of Glatz, can't for the life of him get out of our sitting-room closet.

"The door at the right of the hall leads into the sitting-room. It was in this room where my grandfather sat in his armchair the greater part of the evening, reading the Rivermouth 'Barnacle,' the local newspaper. There was no gas in those days, and the Captain read by the aid of a small block-tin lamp which he held in one hand. I observed that he had a habit of dropping off into a doze every three or four minutes. Two or three times, to my vast amusement, he scorched the edges of the newspaper with the wick of the lamp; and at about half-past eight o'clock I had the satisfaction — I am sorry to confess it was a satisfaction — of seeing the Rivermouth 'Barnacle' in flames.

"My grandfather leisurely extinguished the fire with his hands, and Miss Abigail, who sat near a low table, knitting by the light of an astral lamp, did not even look up. She was quite used to this catastrophe.

"The monotonous 'click click' of Miss Abigail's needles made me nervous after a while, and finally drove me out of the sitting-room into the kitchen, where Kitty caused me to laugh by saying Miss

Abigail thought that what I needed was 'a good dose of hot-drops.'

"Kitty Collins, or Mrs. Catherine, as she preferred to be called, was descended in a direct line from an extensive family of kings who formerly ruled over Ireland. In consequence of various calamities, among which the failure of the potato crop may be mentioned, Miss Kitty Collins, in company with several hundred of her countrymen and countrywomen — also descended from kings — came over to America in an emigrant ship, in the year eighteen hundred and something.

"I don't know what freak of fortune caused the royal exile to turn up at Rivermouth; but turn up she did, a few months after arriving in this country, and was hired by my grandmother to do 'general housework' for the modest sum of four shillings and sixpence a week. In time she grew to be regarded less as a servant than as a friend in the home circle, sharing its joys and sorrows — a faithful nurse, a willing slave, a happy spirit."

Of the dining-room Master Bailey had little to say, excepting the pen picture of Sunday morning in the "Nutter House":

"Sunday morning. . . . At seven o'clock my grandfather comes smilelessly downstairs. He is dressed in black, and looks as if he had lost all his friends during the night. Miss Abigail, also in black, looks

as if she were prepared to bury them, and not indisposed to enjoy the ceremony. Even Kitty Collins has caught the contagious gloom, as I perceive when she brings in the coffee-urn — a solemn and sculpturesque urn at any time, but monumental now — and sets it down in front of Miss Abigail. Miss Abigail gazes at the urn as if it held the ashes of her ancestors, instead of a generous quantity of fine old Java coffee."

In the "Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich," writing of the small hall bedroom in the "Nutter House," his biographer says:

"Even in those days he was a reader, a little dreamer, and moved in a world peopled with the folk of the imagination. The passage in 'The Story of a Bad Boy' describing his little hall-room in the 'Nutter House,' the books he found there and the use he made of them, is of the first biographic importance.

"'I had never before had a chamber all to myself, and this one, about twice the size of our stateroom on board the Typhoon, was a marvel of neatness and comfort. Pretty chintz curtains hung at the window, and a patch quilt of more colors than were in Joseph's coat covered the little bed. The pattern of the wall-paper left nothing to be desired in that line. On a gray background were small bunches of leaves, unlike any that ever grew in this world; and

on every other bunch perched a yellowbird, pitted with crimson spots, as if it had just recovered from a severe attack of the smallpox. That no such bird ever existed did not detract from my admiration of each one. There were two hundred and sixty-eight of these birds in all, not counting those split in two where the paper was badly joined. I counted them once when I was laid up with a fine black eye, and, falling asleep, I immediately dreamed that the whole flock suddenly took wing and flew out of the window. From that time I was never able to regard them as merely inanimate objects.

"'A washstand in the corner, a chest of mahogany drawers, a looking-glass in a filigreed frame, and a high-backed chair studded with brass nails like a coffin, constituted the furniture. Over the head of the bed were two oak shelves, holding perhaps a dozen books — among which were "Theodore; or, The Peruvians"; "Robinson Crusoe"; an odd volume of "Tristram Shandy"; Baxter's "Saints' Rest," and a fine English edition of the "Arabian Nights," with six hundred woodcuts by Harvey.

"'Shall I ever forget the hour when I first overhauled these books? I do not allude especially to Baxter's "Saints' Rest," which is far from being a lively work for the young, but to the "Arabian Nights," and particularly "Robinson Crusoe." The thrill that ran into my fingers' ends then has not

REAR VIEW OF THE "NUTTER HOUSE," WITH GARDEN

run out yet. Many a time did I steal up to this nest of a room, and, taking the dog's-eared volume from its shelf, glide off into an enchanted realm, where there were no lessons to get, and no boys to smash my kite.

"'In a lidless trunk in the garret I subsequently unearthed another motley collection of novels and romances, embracing the "Adventures of Baron Trenck," "Jack Sheppard," "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," and "Charlotte Temple" — all of which I fed upon like a bookworm. I never come across a copy of any of those works without feeling a certain tenderness for the yellow-haired little rascal who used to lean above the magic pages hour after hour, religiously believing every word he read, and no more doubting the reality of Sinbad the Sailor or the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance than he did the existence of his own grandfather.'"

In the story of the "Nutter House" Mr. Aldrich does not speak of the garden; but he has often told me of the inexhaustible territory of pleasure and play it was; at times swarming with Indians in ambush behind every bush and tree; then, presto, change! — it was transformed into an English forest, through which rode Robin Hood and his men; again the pirates had it — Captain Kidd burying his treasure in the moonlight; Jeanne d'Arc proudly riding on her white steed with banners flying; and

here, many times, was solemnized the marriage of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith.

"A happy childhood, ringed with fortunate stars!
What dreams were his in this enchanted sphere,
What intuitions of high destiny!
The honey-bees of Hybla touched his lips
In that new world garden unawares."

Of this summer Mr. Greenslet wrote in his biography: "The summer of 1868 was spent as usual at Portsmouth, and throughout it Aldrich was giving all his spare moments to the writing of 'The Story of a Bad Boy.' He returned to Pinckney Street about the middle of September, and there on the evening of the sixteenth wrote the last words of the chronicle of Tom Bailey. On the seventeenth occurred one of the great happinesses of his life. A month before he had received from Mr. Howells a note, saying, 'I have a fine boy'; on the eighteenth of September Aldrich replied:

"'My Dear Howells, — I have TWO fine boys, born yesterday morning! Everything seems to be well with my wife and with the little fellows, God bless the three of them! and I am exceedingly happy.

"'Your friend,

"'T. B. Aldrich.'"

"Two things there are with Memory will abide —
Whatever else befall — while life flows by:
That soft cold hand-touch at the altar side;
The thrill that shook you at your child's first cry."

CHAPTER XII

AFTER Mr. Aldrich's marriage several happy summers had been passed in Portsmouth before his Grandfather Bailey, or "Grandfather Nutter" as he was named in "The Story of a Bad Boy," died. Never again would the tall figure in black satin waistcoat and high satin stock, the kindly face, the beneficent smile, be seen in the familiar places. The life and cheer of the "Nutter House" had fled.

For the next few years the summer home was in a fishing village, in a long, low house — "Rose Cottage," where the roses and rose-bugs ran riot — the sea and the mermaids the nearest neighbors. There was a tiny garden and a small green lawn, where almost every afternoon strawberries, and, in fact all berries in their season, would bloom and ripen with marvellous rapidity. Then if the mermaids were sitting on their rocks, or tuning their lyres, they would see two lithe jocund sprites going berrying. The shouts of joy with which each berry hidden in its green leaves was welcomed when found echo in my ears. Many were the schemes devised to lure the guileless reapers indoors while the boxes of fruit were emptied in the thick-growing grass. Ah, happy days! Birds singing — youth, happiness, love.

How well remembered is the hour and day of this first summer in "Rose Cottage," when Mr. Aldrich, laden with books and manuscripts, returned from the city of his editorial cares, and said, with perplexed face and whimsical manner: "We are, *nolens volens*, to have a visitor, 'O'ermaster it as you may.' This morning Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe came to the office, and without preamble said, 'I should like to make you and Mrs. Aldrich a little visit; the personality of your wife strongly attracts me.'" Then followed the startling intelligence that the distinguished guest would arrive early the next day.

For the châtelaine of the humble château there was little sleep that night. What would befall her in the next few hours when Mr. Aldrich was in town, and she alone with the distinguished guest — a guest who at the tender age of twelve years had chosen for her theme, "Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?" Unfortunately, at "Rose Cottage" there were no books for research that would treat of such grave subjects, and even memory itself that night proved treacherous, refusing to recall "Questions and Answers," hidden in the blue-covered catechism of her girlhood.

The next morning Mr. Aldrich was adamant to the prayer that he would forego all editorial duties for that day, but giving his promise to return from the city as early as possible, and to bring with him

THE "JOCUND SPRITES"

a man rich in the lore of theology and kindred matters, he hurried to the train, leaving his laughing advice, if there seemed danger of being swept beyond the depths, to call to the rescue the jocund sprites, with their trumpets and drums, their rattling wagons, their squeaking carts — the armament with which they so frequently had silenced conversation in the small house.

Mrs. Stowe was among the notable women we had met in our first days in Boston. From that time she held a large place in our interest, although we seldom saw her. The description she had written of herself to Mrs. Follen in London, fifteen years before, would apply equally well to her personality the first time we saw her. "I am a little bit of a woman, somewhat more than forty, about as thin and dry as a pinch of snuff; never very much to look at in my best days, and looking like a used-up article now." The story which had proved such an important factor in the abolition of slavery was published in the same year as her letter to Mrs. Follen. In the same letter she wrote of it: "Having been poor all my life, and expecting to be poor the rest of it, the idea of making money by a book which I wrote because I could not help it never occurred to me."

On the day of publication of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" three thousand copies of the book were sold, and

within a year, one hundred and twenty editions, or over three hundred thousand copies, of the book were sold in this country. Eight power presses running day and night were barely able to keep pace with the demand for it.

In the life of Mrs. Stowe, written by her son, he says: "Almost in a day the poor professor's wife had become the most talked-of woman in the world; her influence for good was spreading to its remotest corners, and henceforth she was to be a public character, whose every movement would be watched with interest, and whose every word would be quoted."

At dinner the night before the memorable visit Mr. Aldrich had suggested that as the next day would probably be warm, a claret cup, served with its clinking ice, its ruby color, and its bit of mint, would be a refreshment for body and soul. And with the suggestion the flattering remark that of all the accomplishments in the *ménage* of the Mistress of the Manor none surpassed her brewing. Then, lifting his glass, with a gay little nod he hummed the words of Sir Harry's toast:

"And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.
Let the toast pass;
Drink to the lass;
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass."

It was with no joyous heart, however, that after Mr. Aldrich's departure the next morning, the Mis-

tress of the Manor began the brewing of her cup; her troubled thought making discord as to how much measure of this and that would bring to harmony the ingredients of her ruby mixture. Thought refused to concentrate on the work of her hands; it wandered to other matters. "What does a personality that attracts consist of?" "Can the Immortality of the Soul be proved by the Light of Nature?" Was Mr. Aldrich half in earnest when he advised her before meeting this visitor to familiarize her mind with an exhaustive study of all the concordances of Scripture she could borrow or find in order to cope with an intellect that had, at the tender age of twelve, chosen this theme for her composition?

The morning was half over before a carriage stopped at the door, and a reluctant hostess went forward to greet her distinguished guest. What was a personality that attracts? Whatever it was it certainly was not an unconscious personality, but a very conscious one, that waited at the door. The day was excessively warm, the train from the city overcrowded, making Mrs. Stowe look worried and frail, like a last rose of summer. With the first look at the wilted flower, personality fled, and there was but one thought: what can be done for this guest's comfort? She was brought into the house, placed in the easiest chair, a fan put in her hand, her bonnet taken off. With her sigh of relief and gratitude for

these ministrations came the request for something to drink that would quench her inordinate thirst. Almost before Mrs. Stowe had finished speaking, to her young hostess came the remembrance of the ruby cup cooling in the ice chest, and with the remembrance a feeling of deep thankfulness that she had something so refreshing to offer. A little tray on which was a plate holding a biscuit and a glass pitcher filled with the delectable mixture was quickly brought and placed on a stand by Mrs. Stowe's chair, and a hostess who had forgotten "personality" and embarrassment was leaning over it, laughingly saying:

"And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink.
A soldier's a man;
O, man's life 's but a span;
Why, then, let a soldier drink."

The soldier drank, and very shortly afterwards complained of the unsettled character of the room, which seemed to the visitor to be stationary at an angle of forty-five degrees. And the sea turn — everything is in a blue mist — did we often have such sudden fogs? She would lie down if the sofa had not such a momentum; to her eye it was misbehaving as badly as her berth at sea.

It was with penitent and contrite heart that the hapless sinner, whose want of concentration of her

errant thoughts in the brewing of the cup had brought about this dire mischance, assisted her guest; and fervent was her prayer that the recumbent position would prove recuperative and restore speedily the equilibrium that through her fault had gone so far astray.

In the days of the sixties women still wore hoops or reeds in their skirts, and in lying on the sofa Mrs. Stowe's skirts, like Hamlet's words, "flew up," revealing very slender ankles and feet encased in prunella boots; the elastic V at the sides no longer elastic, but worn and loose. The stockings were white, and the flowery ribbon of the garter knots was unabashed by the sunlight.

What was to be done? The hour of Mr. Aldrich's return was imminent. The perturbed and anxious sinner sat in watchful silence. On a distant chair lay a gossamer scarf which would drape the unconscious form. But if in the getting of it she wake the sleeper? Which was the kindest thing — to wait for "Nature's sweet restorer" or to drape the scarf and run the risk of waking her poor victim? If Mr. Aldrich was only coming alone, she could bar the door and banish him. But in this long, low house there was but one living-room, and what could be done with the stranger guest who was coming with him? For this reason the venture must be made. With stealthy steps the goal was won, and light as a butterfly's

wing the gossamer scarf slowly descended, only to rise again with accelerated motion, for Mrs. Stowe at the first touch sat straight upright, and with dim, reproachful eyes asked: "Why did you do it? I am weak, weary and warm as I am — let me sleep." There was given a gentle hint that there was drapery to be rearranged, but the negative was firm, and the answer decisive: "I won't be any properer than I have a mind to be. Let me sleep."

Fortunately, Mr. Aldrich was detained in town and did not arrive at "Rose Cottage" until a later hour than he had expected. Before he came Mrs. Stowe had had a strong cup of coffee, her skirts had resumed their normal shape, and she was herself again. At dinner the hapless sinner had the poignant pain of hearing the unconscious lamb telling the guest of the heat of the day and the motion of the train producing a strange dizziness which she had never experienced before. Until the writing of this page never has there been a confession made of this episode; in all the intervening years it has been as a fountain sealed.

When the brief visit was over and the adieus being made, Mrs. Stowe said at parting: "I am always like a spider that is puzzled where to attach his threads for a web. You and Mrs. Aldrich unknowingly gave me a *motif* for a story." Then turning to Mr. Aldrich, she said: "There is so much positive

character in this little lady that I could not resist the desire to put her in a book. But I had come to the end of the bridge, and there was need to meet my heroine again." Then, with the good-bye kiss to her hostess, added, "She is not you, just you, but a type of you."

It was a surprised and disturbed heroine that closed the door on the departing guest, and asked of the jocund sprites, whose hands she held, if they thought it kind to put their mother in a story-book. And dear was their answer: "I love you, mamma, my mamma, my dear little mamma!" And beyond that she never knew.

It was in the autumn of this year that Mr. Aldrich first met Mr. Clemens, although a year previous their epistolary acquaintance began, introduced by a very savage letter which Mark Twain had written to Mr. Aldrich, not as a comrade and fellow worker, but to the unscrupulous and unreliable editor of "Every Saturday." Mr. Aldrich had copied from another periodical some rhymes credited to Mark Twain about a euchre game that was turned into poker, and evidently had commented upon them unfavorably, as being an imitation of Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee." Mr. Clemens wrote to say the lines were not his, and he wished to have the misstatement corrected, which Mr. Aldrich, in a very complimentary paragraph, immediately did.

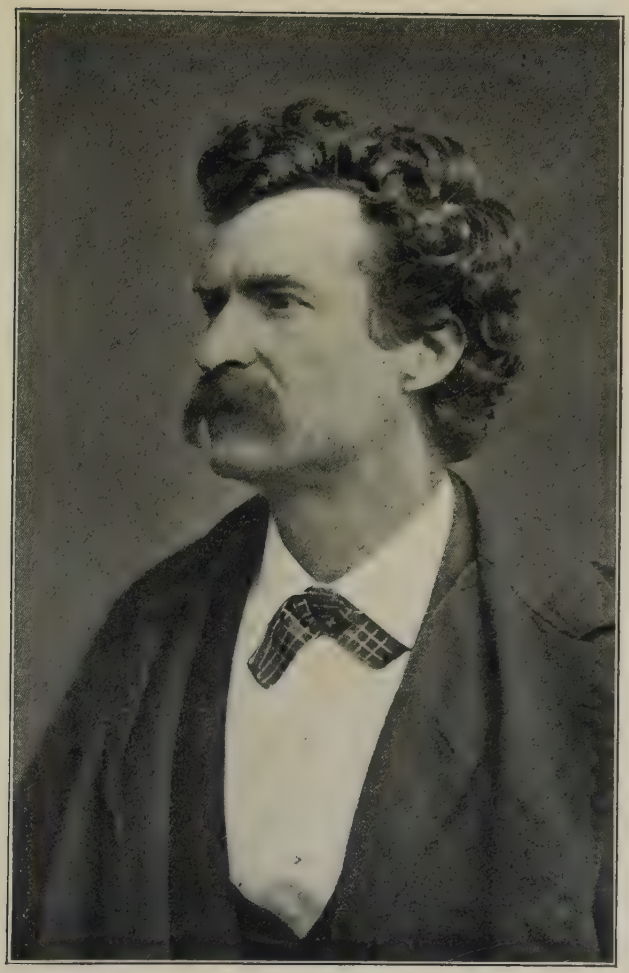
The second letter to Mr. Aldrich begins:

"DEAR MR. ALDRICH, —

"I hear a good deal about doing things on the 'spur of the moment' — I invariably regret things I do on the spur of the moment. That disclaimer of mine was a case in point. I am ashamed every time I think of my bursting out before an unconcerned public with that bombastic pow-wow about burning publishers' letters and all that sort of imbecility, and about my not being an imitator, etc. Who would find out that I am a natural fool if I kept always cool and never let nature come to the surface? Nobody."

The last letter in this series was from Mr. Aldrich, ending in this wise: "When you come to Boston, if you do not make your presence manifest to me, I'll put an item in 'Every Saturday,' to the effect that although you are generally known as 'Mark Twain,' your favorite *nom de plume* is 'Barry Gray.' I flatter myself that will bring you."

It was in the early dark of a winter's night a year after this belligerent correspondence that Mr. Aldrich came home bringing with him a most unusual guest, clothed in a coat of sealskin, the fur worn outward; a sealskin cap well down over his ears; the cap half revealing and half concealing the mass of reddish hair underneath; the heavy mustache having the same red tint. The trousers came well below the



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coat, and were of a yellowish-brown color; stockings of the same tawny hue, which the low black shoe emphasized. May and December intermixed, producing strange confusion in one's preconceived ideas. Was it the dress for winter, or was it the dress for summer? Seemingly it all depended on the range of vision. If one looked up, winter; if one looked down, summer. But when the wearer spoke it was not difficult for the listener to believe that he was not entirely accountable for the strange gear. It was but too evident that he had looked upon the cup when it was red, for seemingly it had both cheered and inebriated, as the gentleman showed marked inability to stand perpendicular, but swayed from side to side, and had also difficulty with his speech; he did not stammer exactly, but after each word he placed a period. His sentences were whimsical, and host and guest laughed loudly, with and at each other. The hostess happened to be in the hall as Mr. Aldrich's key turned in the lock and host and guest entered. Obviously something very amusing was being said, interrupted for the moment by the words of introduction "My wife," and the gay laughter continued, dying down for a minute, to start up again; no intimation whatever given as to what name might be attached to this strange-looking personage.

Winter disappeared with the removal of the guest's fur coat and cap, and summer, or at least

early springtime, emerged in the violet tint of the carelessly tied neck-knot, and the light gray of under coat and waistcoat; but for the third one in the group a cold and repellent frost had steadily set in, stiffening and making rigid the face and figure of an inhospitable hostess, who cast reproachful glances at the blameless householder who had taken the unauthorized liberty of bringing home a guest to dinner. At least in this unjust wise the glances were so interpreted, on account of an incident of a few evenings before, when Mr. Aldrich had brought to his fireside an unexpected friend — a friend who in disrobing for the night must have been surprised to discover many a sundry black-and-blue spot on his white flesh, which the sharp boot-heels of his hostess had administered, when the host had helped himself too generously to a scanty dish of oysters or sweetmeats, which would have been ample for two, but was short rations for three. The dinner of the few days before had produced three surprises — the guest's astonishment at the boot-heels; the hostess's astonishment at the sudden and penetrating glances directed to her by the otherwise well-behaved stranger; and the host's surprise, when, in the sanctity of their bedroom, the irate wife had demanded the reason why her gentle hints had not been acted on; and the mutual surprise and horror when it was discovered they had never been received.

The cocoon of this new strange visitor being cast aside, the little party of three adjourned to the library, where Mr. Aldrich vainly sought to dispel the frosty atmosphere by the genial warmth of the blazing fire; but in spite of his efforts the gay laughter waned as the influence of the wet blanket became more perceptible, as the holder of it sat mute and unresponsive to laughter or jest; and cold was the negative that answered Mr. Aldrich's anxious inquiries if she had a headache, or was ill.

When the hands of the clock pointed to the usual dinner hour, no maid appeared with the announcement that dinner was served, nor was there any answering notice or fellow sympathy to the eye that looked to the mistress of the feast, and then back to the clock, whose hands slowly moved to quarter past — half past — quarter of — and then the strange guest arose and said he thought he would go. The adieus were made and accepted, by one with icy formality, which the other member of the fraternity tried to make atonement for by an exuberant cordiality as he escorted his guest to the door. On his return to the library with unwonted sternness he asked why the dinner was three quarters of an hour late, and why the guest had not been asked to stay; his answer was hysterical tears, and in his bewilderment he heard: "How could you have brought a man in that condition to your home, to

sit at your table, and to meet your wife? Why, he was so intoxicated he could not stand straight; he stammered in his speech —" With these words the tangled knot was cut. Quickly the answer came: "Why, dear, did you not know who he was? What you thought wine was but his mannerisms and idiosyncrasies, characteristics of himself, and born with Mark Twain." There was silence for the moment, and then louder grew the hysterical sobs, muffling and choking the voice: "Mark Twain! Was that Mark Twain! Oh, go after him, go after him; bring him back and tell him, tell him — O, what *can* you tell him!" But it was not until years afterwards that he *was* told.

CHAPTER XIII

LOOKING backward over the halcyon days of the next few years are the vague memories of the coming of Bret Harte in his victorious journey from the Pacific to the Atlantic Coast. His poems and stories, especially "The Heathen Chinee," had made of him a celebrity so renowned that the newspapers heralded his progress from city to city in the manner befitting a prince of royal lineage.

Mr. Harte was to be the guest of Mr. Howells on that first visit to Boston; Mr. Howells was then the assistant editor of the "Atlantic Monthly," Mr. James T. Fields being the editor-in-chief. Mr. Howells's account of this visit is so interesting, and throws so much light upon Bret Harte's character, that I tell it as he has told it in his "Literary Friends and Acquaintance":

"When the adventurous young editor who had proposed being his host for Boston, while Harte was still in San Francisco, and had not yet begun his princely progress eastward, read of the honors that attended his coming from point to point, his courage fell, as if he perhaps had committed himself in too great an enterprise. Who was he, indeed, that he should think of making this dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame, his guest, especially when he

heard that in Chicago Harte failed of attending a banquet of honor because the givers of it had not sent a carriage to fetch him to it as the alleged use was in San Francisco? Whether true or not, and it was probably not true in just that form, it must have been this rumor which determined his host to drive into Boston for him with the handsomest hack which the livery of Cambridge afforded, and not trust to the horse cars and the express to get him and his baggage out, as he would have done with a less portentous guest. However it was, he instantly lost all fear when they met at the station, and Harte pressed forward with his cordial hand-clasp as if he was not even a fairy prince, and with that voice and laugh which was surely the most winning in the world. Before they came in sight of the editor's humble roof he had mocked himself to his guest at his trepidation, and Harte with burlesque magnanimity had consented to be for that occasion only something less formidable than he had loomed afar. He accepted with joy the theory of passing a week in the home of virtuous poverty, and the week began as delightfully as it went on. Cambridge began very promptly to show him those hospitalities which he could value, and continued the fable of his fairy princeliness in the curiosity of those humbler admirers who could not hope to be his hosts or fellow guests at dinner or luncheon.

"It cannot harm him or any one now to own that Harte was nearly always late for those luncheons and dinners which he was always going out to, and it needed the anxieties and energies of both families to get him into his clothes and then into the carriage, when a good deal of final buttoning must have been done, in order that he might not arrive so very late. He was the only one concerned who was quite unconcerned; his patience with his delays was inexhaustible; he arrived smiling, serenely jovial, radiating a bland gaiety from his whole person, and ready to ignore any discomfort he might have occasioned."

On Mr. Harte's first day in Boston he dined with the Saturday Club, where he met among others Louis Agassiz, Henry W. Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Richard H. Dana, Jr.

After a week's stay in Cambridge, Bret Harte returned to New York, and a few days afterwards accepted the offer of James R. Osgood & Company, then publishers of the "Atlantic," to pay him ten thousand dollars during the ensuing year for whatever he might write in the twelve months, be it much or little. But in despite of the certainty of this income, Bret Harte had not been long in the East before he began to feel the pressure of money difficulties, from which pressure he, and his father

before him, was never free; nor would he have been with the wealth of the Indies at his command; for notwithstanding his Hebrew blood, he was a born spendthrift.

> "The fault's not mine, you understand:
> God shaped my palm so I can hold
> But little water in my hand,
> And not much gold."

On a subsequent visit of Mr. Harte's to Boston, I well remember, late on a stormy December night as we were covering with ashes the too bright blaze of the cheerful logs of the living-room fire, the startling sound of the front doorbell, followed by the buoyant, confident tone of Bret Harte at the foot of the stairs, calling: "Are you home, Aldrich? I have come to make a night of it." And then the melodious voice as he ascended the stairs two at a time chanting, "Polly, put the kettle on, Polly put the kettle on, and we'll all have tea." He had been to a dinner and reception given in his honor, and coming gaily into the room he asked for the loan of our spare room for the night, saying that the hotel room was dreary, and that he was in a mood to be happy and gay. We joyfully loaned him the room and the lights — the pajamas and the brushes — and in return he loaned us through all the small hours, until the coming of the dawn, the aroma of his host's choicest cigars. The next morning, still ar-

rayed in his evening clothes, he went unembarrassed and airily hotelwards. It may be that our house was for him a palladium that night; for a few evenings afterwards with untroubled charm he spoke to a great audience in Tremont Temple, while a sheriff sat behind a screen and waited. Hurried calls were sent to his publisher, who was dining out and difficult to find, so that the lecture had to be lengthened until the rescuer came, and the cue was given that the last word could now be safely spoken; the all-seeing eye had disappeared, and the chair behind the screen was vacant.

Another evening is very vivid in my memory, when Mr. Harte came to dinner *en famille*, or, as he said a friend said to him in California, "*En famille*, with my family." There was never a more delightful guest or fascinating companion than he was on this night, when, sitting about the round table with the walnuts and the wine, he told in the intimate talk of the boy who at seventeen had decided after the death of his father to go West in search of adventure and fortune. How he had landed in San Francisco without profession or trade, money or prospects, and the life that had opened to him there in his first week. He made to our imagination the picture so vivid that we walked with him along the city front, seeing the dim lines of warehouses, the unsafe wharves on their rotten piles,

the two or three ships still standing where a sudden storm had beached them a year or two before. The warehouses where the trunks and boxes of the early forty-niners were stored by the missing and dead owners. We went with him through the Spanish quarter, and saw the Mexican in his crimson sash and velvet jacket; the women in their lace mantillas and their ruffled skirts playing their guitars and dancing the *chacuca* and other dances of their nation. The gambling-saloons and the gaudily dressed and painted women who presided over them. The principal gambling-houses were in the heart of the city and were open every hour of the day and night; the atmosphere hazy with the scent of tobacco smoke and redolent of the fumes of brandy. The wild music and the jingling of gold and silver were almost the only sounds. Almost everybody played, and in fact the gambling-houses were as clubs for business and professional men. People staked and lost their last dollar, Mr. Harte laughingly said, with a calm solemnity and a resignation that was almost Christian. Every gambling-house, even the poorest on Long Wharf, had its music, and in its pause not a sound could be heard excepting the low murmur of voices and the chinking of the coins which the players shuffled backward and forward in their hands.

Mr. Harte said that during the first weeks in the new and strange life that had opened up to the boy

of seventeen, he had tried his luck at gold-finding, and shovelled and picked and worked with the rest of the comrades that worked at his side. Later he discarded the mining tools and was employed as a messenger by the Adams Express Company; drifting from that company into the composing-room of the "Golden Era," which at that time was a famous paper, and naturally he began to contribute to its pages. Mr. Harte said he had written "The Heathen Chinee" at a sitting and thrown it aside. Later, for want of a better thing, it was put in print merely to fill up a space, and that no surprise could be so great as his at the success of the verses when they were copied by almost every newspaper in the United States.

Mark Twain was also a fellow worker on the "Era," and became known through its columns. The "Golden Era" was said to be the cradle and the grave of many a high hope of budding genius.

Boston possessed, in the winter of 1871–72, a lady of towering social ambition, who, unhappily for herself, was not of the privileged order, and had never been able to force the gates that barred her from the reigning aristocracy of that city. But if she was lacking in grace, she was not in courage, her resourceful spirit proving it when it brought to her mind the suggestion that if this Western Lion could be lured to her lair, with what confidence cards of invitation

could be sent to the doors that had hitherto been sealed to her hospitality. Fortune favored her quest, and the cards of invitation to meet Mr. Bret Harte on a certain evening, brought more acceptances than regrets, for the young author had received much adulation in his triumphal progress from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and even the "London News" had an editorial beginning, "America has a New Star."

When the eventful night came, and exclusive Boston blue blood had greeted with sufficient hauteur the hostess who had captured the Lion, the long and showy drawing-room was well filled with representative men and women, who met perhaps for the first time socially at a house the châtelaine of which was without the stamp of Vere de Vere — that insignia being the *sine qua non* of what was called our best society.

Before the evening was half over, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe was asked by Mr. Harte if she would not give him the privilege of hearing from her lips "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Mrs. Howe had a beautiful and highly trained voice, and it was always a pleasure to listen to it. After "The Battle Hymn" Mrs. Howe sang an Italian song and ended with an English ballad, full of pathos. At the finish Mrs. Howe slowly rose from the piano, and the eloquent silence was broken by her hostess's voice at the

extreme end of the room saying, "Oh, Mrs. Howe, do now sing something comic"!!!

Among the new friends we were frequently meeting, we numbered Mrs. Howe, and many were the pleasant missives sent to our small house. "Ye Aldriches come to-night." And sometimes the missives began, "Dear little flower."

Mrs. Howe was not only a poet, but a patriot as well. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was sung during the Civil War as often as "America," or "The Star-Spangled Banner." On the happy evening when you were bidden to her house you were sure of meeting a coterie of charming men and women, who sat at her feet with rapt attention while she talked of Goethe and Schiller, or of Kant's philosophy. Then suddenly forgetting the serious things of life, her buoyant spirit would overflow with mischievous merriment, as she challenged Mr. Aldrich to a battle of wits by propounding problems of arrant nonsense, as confusedly interwoven and tangled as are similar paragraphs locked in the pages of "Science and Health."

From this evening there were few nights for Mr. Harte without engagements; his charming personality making him a most welcome guest. Mr. Harte was at this time in the height of his fame, everybody quoting "The Heathen Chinee," and "Truthful James." Harvard, among the many honors bestowed

on him, invited him to deliver the annual Phi Beta Kappa Poem. Mr. Harte accepted the invitation, but apparently did not recognize the dignity of the occasion. He made his appearance in gaudy raiment and wearing green gloves. His poem was as inappropriate as his dress. Clothes and the man were equally disappointing to Harvard. The poet fully realized the situation, and fled in dismay.

CHAPTER XIV

LOOKING backward through the mist and dimness of the receding past, how happy are the memories of our first visit to Hartford! I hear with startling clearness voices that have long been silent; through the darkling mist forms take shape; joyous shadows return again to earth, move, speak, and have their being.

The invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Clemens for this visit included Mr. Howells and Mr. Osgood. The little party of four who met that bright day at the station were fortunate in possessing the best life gives — happiness, health, freedom from care. As our train moved slowly into the station at Springfield, we saw on the platform Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, waiting to join their guests, and go with them the rest of the short journey. Mark Twain was then in his golden dawn; he had friends in crowds; he had married the woman he loved, and fame had become a tangible asset. With the same slow and lengthened utterance that had made the old man at his lecture ask, "Be them your natural tones of eloquence?" — with his waving, undulating motion as he came towards us he said, "Well, I reckon I am prodigiously glad to see you all. I got up this morning

and put on a clean shirt, and feel powerful fine. Old Warner there did n't do it, and is darned sorry — said it was a lot of fuss to get himself constructed properly just to show off, and that that bit of a red silk handkerchief on the starboard side of the pocket of his gray coat would make up for it; and I allow it has done it."

On the arrival at Hartford we were met by the same carriage and coachman that Mr. Clemens, after he had entered the enchanted land, described to Mr. Redpath, who was urging lecture engagements: "I guess I am out of the field permanently. Have got a lovely wife, a lovely house, a lovely carriage and a coachman whose style and dignity are simply awe-inspiring — nothing less." Patrick McAleer was accompanied by "George," who was both butler and guardian spirit of the house. George had been the body servant of an army general, and was of the best style of the Southern negro of that day. With much formality we were presented to him by Mr. Clemens, who said: "George came one day to wash windows; he will stay for his lifetime. His morals are defective; he is a gambler — will bet on anything. I have trained him so that now he is a proficient liar — you should see Mrs. Clemens's joy and pride when she hears him lying to the newspaper correspondent, or the visitor at the front door."

We dined the evening of our arrival at the War-

ners', in a room so vivid in memory that the scent of the flowers still lingers. The conservatory was on the same level as the dining-room and opened into it, and was as a midsummer out-of-door garden, with its tangle of vines and flowers. The plants were set in the ground, the vines climbed up and overhung the roof, and the fountain, with lilies at the base, made fairy music.

Never again can there be such talk as scintillated about the table that night. Howells, Clemens, Aldrich, and Warner made a quartette that was incomparable. To my remembrance comes the description which years afterwards Mr. Clemens gave Mr. Stevenson of Mr. Aldrich and which only inadequately conveys the brilliancy of his talk when he was in the vein. Mr. Clemens said: "Mr. Aldrich has never had his peer for prompt and pithy and witty and humorous sayings. None has equalled him, certainly none has surpassed him in the felicity of phrasing with which he clothes those children of his fancy. Aldrich is always brilliant; he can't help it; he is a fire opal set round with rose diamonds; when he is not speaking, you know that his dainty fancies are twinkling and glimmering around in him; when he speaks the diamonds flash. Yes, he is always brilliant; he will be brilliant in hell, you will see." Stevenson, smiling a chuckly smile, said, "I hope not." "Well, you will, and he will dim even

those ruddy fires and look like a transfigured Adonis backed against a pink sunset."

When the guests returned to the Clemens household, it was not until the small hours of the night that it was voted to adjourn and go to bed. But long before that, Mr. Howells, with eyes suffused with tears, had pleaded with Mrs. Aldrich to use her influence to make Mr. Aldrich abstain from any more provocative speech. Mr. Howells said he could not bear it longer, he was ill with laughter, and that for friendship's sake Aldrich must be muffled and checked. Let the others talk, but beg him to keep still.

The next morning, as we were dressing and talking of the pleasant plans of the day, there was a loud and rather authoritative knock at the bedroom door, and Mr. Clemens's voice was heard, saying, "Aldrich, come out, I want to speak to you." The other occupant of the room wrapped her kimono round her more closely, and crept to the door, for evidently something of serious import was happening, or about to happen. The words overheard were most disquieting. Twain's voice had its usual calmness and slowness of speech, but was lacking in the kindly, mellow quality of its accustomed tone, as he said: "In Heaven's name, Aldrich, what are you doing? Are you emulating the kangaroos, with hob-nails in your shoes, or trying the jumping-frog business?

Our bedroom is directly under yours, and poor 'Livy and her headache — do try to move more quietly, though 'Livy would rather suffer than have you give up your game on her account." Then the sound of receding footsteps.

Our consternation was as great as our surprise at the reprimand, for we had been unconscious of walking heavily, or of making unnecessary noise. The bedroom was luxurious in its appointments, the rugs soft on the floor; we could only surmise that the floor boards had some peculiar acoustic quality that emphasized sound. On tiptoe we finished our toilets, and spoke only in whispers, much disturbed in mind that we had troubled our hostess, and hoped she knew that we would not willingly have added to her headache even the weight of a hummingbird's wing. When the toilets were finished, slowly and softly we went down the stairs and into the breakfast room, where, behind the large silver coffee urn, sat Mrs. Clemens. With sorrowful solicitude we asked if her headache was better, and begged forgiveness for adding to her pain. To our amazement she answered, "I have no headache." In perplexed confusion we apologized for the noise we inadvertently made. "Noise!" Mrs. Clemens replied. "We have not heard a sound. If you had shouted we should not have known it, for our rooms are in another wing of the house." At the other end of

the table Mark Twain sat, looking as guileless as a combination of cherubim and seraphim — never a word, excepting with lengthened drawl, more slow than usual, "Oh, do come to your breakfast, Aldrich, and don't talk all day."

It was a joyous group that came together at the table that morning, and loud was the laughter, and rapid the talk, excepting Mrs. Clemens, who sat rather quiet, and with an expression of face as if she were waiting. Suddenly Mr. Clemens brought the laughter to a pause with his rap on the table, and then, with resonant and deep-toned voice, speaking even more slowly than usual, he asked God's blessing and help for the day. The words were apparently sincere, and spoken with reverent spirit, but we who listened were struck with the same surprised wonder as was the companion of his rougher days, Joe Goodman, who came East to visit them, and was dumbfounded to see Mark Twain ask a blessing and join in family worship. Nothing could have so clearly shown his adoration of Mrs. Clemens as this. He worshipped her as little less than a saint, and would have "hid her needle in his heart to save her little finger from a scratch."

Mrs. Clemens, in these early days of their married life, was a woman of deep religious feeling, and Mr. Clemens at this time had no particular doctrines of his own, so that it did not require much persuasion

on Mrs. Clemens's part for her husband to yield to her wishes. Later they both drifted very far from creeds and sects.

In 1867, on the steamship Quaker City, Mr. Clemens had seen in young Mr. Charles Langdon's room a miniature of his sister, Olivia. At the first sight of the pictured face it possessed for Mr. Clemens the magnetism and influence that the lovely original was to have for him throughout his life. It drew and held him with insistent force, and often he went to young Langdon's room to again look upon the face that had grown so dear. Mr. Clemens said to me, that "from the day of his first sight of that delicate face to this, he could truly say, she had never been out of his mind."

It was on this memorable transatlantic cruise that one of those "Marchaunt Adventurers" was to create a book, the fame of which would extend all over the world.

Henry Ward Beecher, Lieutenant-General Sherman, and General Banks were expected to be of the party, but for some reason did not materialize. This was Mr. Clemens's first year of literary recognition on the Atlantic Coast. He had published in the "Golden Era" "The Jumping Frog," and followed it by several notable papers written in his special vein. He had heard, while waiting in the shipping office of the Quaker City, a newspaper man

ask what notables were going on the cruise, and had heard the answer of the clerk, given with evident pride, Lieutenant-General Sherman, Henry Ward Beecher, and Mark Twain.

Mr. Clemens was at this time thirty-one or two years old; a sparely built man of medium height; a finely shaped, classical head, covered with thick, shaggy, red-colored hair; a mustache of the same tawny hue; eyes which glimmered, keen and twinkling, under overhanging, bushy eyebrows, each hair of which ruffled itself, taking part with unwarrantable intrusion in Mr. Clemens's moods, were they grave or gay. Once, in my remembrance, so belligerent and fierce was their aspect, that his listener, who had the temerity to differ with the views he was expressing, begged the privilege of brushing the eyebrows down, that she might have courage to continue with the argument.

The years which Mr. Clemens had passed on the Mississippi, and the rough life of California, lacked greatly the refining influence of a different civilization. With that sharp schooling he had become too well acquainted with all the coarser types of human nature. He was born with a marvellous gift of phrase, and his one-time friends could not resist the temptation of developing his profanity to an incomparable perfection. He said to a friend who remonstrated with him on the habit, "In certain try-

ing circumstances, desperate circumstances, urgent circumstances, profanity furnishes a relief denied even to prayer."

After the return from the Atlantic cruise, Mr. Clemens was invited by young Mr. Langdon to dine with his people at the St. Nicholas Hotel, in New York. The invitation was eagerly accepted, for it meant for him the realization of his dream. The delicate face of the miniature in young Langdon's cabin had from the first day of seeing it been ever present in his thought.

Olivia Langdon was twenty-two years old at the time of the first meeting. A slender, girlish figure, with the little touch of appeal in her smile which long confinement to a sick-room brings. She was undoubtedly to Mr. Clemens a type of woman hitherto unknown. Mr. Anson Burlingame, a year before this meeting, had given Mr. Clemens the needed and convincing advice, to seek companionship among men of superior intellect and character; to refine himself; his work; always to climb; never to affiliate with inferiors. From this advice the knowledge was born that life meant something higher than he had yet known; but in despite of Mr. Clemens's desire for better things, he was still a man untrained and unpolished; the customs of the frontier still held him fast.

Miss Langdon's nature, in its gentleness, culture,

spirituality, was the antithesis of his. Later, when this novel and unusual Westerner wooed and won this white and fragile flower (for so she always seemed), the men of her world said, "We did not dare to speak of love to her, she seemed as if she so lightly touched earth, belonging to another sphere."

At sixteen years of age, Miss Langdon had fallen on the ice and seriously injured her spine. For the next two years she was confined to her bed, a pathetic invalid, unable to sit even when supported; unable to lie in any position upon her back. Mr. Langdon felt his wealth was as sand to be scattered to the four winds, if by its use relief could be brought. Great physicians and surgeons were summoned to her bedside; but she failed steadily, until even hope was dead. Among the many mechanical devices for her relief in position was a pulley attached to the ceiling and to her bed, raising her so slowly, and almost imperceptibly, that it was an hour before she could be brought to a half-reclining position; even with that gentle movement she became unconscious. The physician dared not attempt the venture again. After two years of helpless suffering, one day a half-sheet of paper was blown in at an open door, and fluttered to Mrs. Langdon's feet. It was a poorly printed advertisement of marvellous restoration to health by the laying on of hands; the blind seeing; the lame walking; the deaf hearing.

Mrs. Langdon read the soiled bit of paper with incredulous mind; but notwithstanding her unbelief, the mother love grasped at the straw. Taking the sheet of paper to Mr. Langdon, she asked him to read it, and as he read she said: "The laying on of hands was a miracle in our Saviour's day; pray God to grant a miracle in this. Physicians, surgeons, education, science — all have failed us, all have proved futile; hope itself is vanished."

An appointment was made with Dr. Newton for the next day. He came into the darkened room, and as he entered said, "Have light; throw up the curtains; open wide the windows." Approaching the bed, he bent over the pale face and the slight figure lying there, murmuring a short prayer; then in low voice he said: "Daughter, be of good comfort, according to your faith be it unto you. I put my arms about you and bid you sit up." Earnest was the dissent of the watchers at the bedside. They told the danger, the pain, the long unconsciousness that had followed the experiment; the strict orders of the physicians that it must never be repeated. The low voice answered, "My arms are still about you; sit up." Slowly, and with vague eyes the slender form obeyed. The girl who had lain helpless on that bed for two years sat erect and still. A few moments of unbroken silence passed, and then in the soundless room the voice was heard again. "My arm is

still about you; lie down." Naturally and quietly the body relaxed, the head sank to the white pillows. For a moment the strange Healer stood motionless, then bending over the bed said, "Sleep well to-night; to-morrow I will come." And was gone before any there were sufficiently aroused from their astonishment to intercept him.

The next day the Healer again came to the bedside, and said to the sick girl, "Arise, put your foot to the floor and stand." The following day, at the farthest end of the room, he placed a chair, asking the invalid to go to it. When she was seated, the Healer said: "Health and strength will now abide with you. Sickness and pain are banished." Leaving the girl still sitting in the chair, the Healer went slowly from the room. Mr. Langdon, marvelling greatly, followed, saying: "What can I offer you that will induce you to stay and watch over my sick child?" The Healer, slowly turning, said: "'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' I want neither gold nor silver. My sick and suffering call me, and I must go to do the work that waits for me to do."

After the meeting in New York of the Langdon family, an invitation was given to Mr. Clemens to visit the household at any time he found it convenient. Many of Mr. Clemens's lecture engagements were in the State of New York, so that often

he could avail himself of the privilege. There had been a gay and happy week spent in the Langdon home, and in that week Mr. Clemens more fully realized how irreclaimably all his hopes and dreams — his ambition and desire — were centred on the girl whose pictured face had so strongly drawn and held him. On the morning of the last day of the visit, Mr. Clemens said to young Langdon: "My week is up, and I must go. I ought to go. I am in love with your sister." There was a pause for a moment; then young Langdon, much distressed, said: "Don't wait. There is a train in half an hour. I will get you to it." But Mr. Clemens refused the offer, and young Langdon had to be content with the promise that Mr. Clemens would be prudent, watchful, and wary, and would go that night. But when night came, and the adieus were said, there was an accident to the wagon as it started from the door — young Langdon and his guest came down with force on the paved street. Neither of the passengers was hurt, but an inspiration was born to Mr. Clemens — the opportunity to prolong his visit; and it was two weeks later before he "allowed" that he was quite strong enough to resume his lectures. When the lecturer set out again on his travels, there was a provisional engagement to Miss Langdon.

When her father asked Mr. Clemens for the names

of some of his San Francisco friends, that he might write to them for credentials, he gave among others the name of Mr. Joe Goodman, who was owner and editor-in-chief of "The Enterprise," one of the most remarkable frontier papers ever published. In giving the name of Mr. Goodman, Mr. Clemens added that "he had lied for Goodman a hundred times, and Goodman would lie for him if necessary, so his testimony would be of no value."

At the time of this joyous visit in Hartford, Olivia Langdon had been married four years. She was no longer the inexperienced, retiring girl that had loved the shadow of life and found her happiness in its shade. The visit to Europe, the association with the brilliant men and women she met there, had greatly enlarged her vision, awakening her fully to the responsibility she had assumed. She took with quiet and simple dignity her place, and guided with wonderful tact a nature so untrained and undisciplined, so filled with wild and savage impulses, that a less angelic and courageous soul would often have shrunk from the self-appointed task. But always to help and sustain her was the knowledge of his idolizing love for her. He soon learned to realize her rare literary perception, and always, as far as she was able, she encouraged him to give only his best to the world. In an early letter to Mr. Twichell, Mr. Clemens in a characteristic way speaks of this new influence.

"Originally I quit [smoking] on 'Livy's account. Not that I believe that there was the faintest reason in the matter, but just as I would deprive myself of sugar in my coffee if she wished it, or quit wearing socks if she thought them immoral."

Out of those far-off days are two indelible pictures in my memories of the last morning and evening of our happy visit: the assembling of the guests at the breakfast table, and while we waited the entrance of our hostess, Mr. Clemens, with sober face and his inimitable drawl, telling his night experience, with the orders for the next day. The evening before, Mrs. Clemens had been speaking of her consternation in finding she had misspelled a word in a formal note, and said it had always been a great mortification to her that she could not spell; that the sound of a word left her helpless as to the spelling of it, and that, for Mr. Clemens's sake, she should not be allowed to write even the simplest note unless he looked it over. While she was speaking there glimmered and twinkled in Mr. Clemens's eye a laughing imp that boded mischief. Mr. Clemens said, "I had just fallen into 'the first sweet sleep of dawn,' when this murmur reached my ear: 'Mark, do tell me how to spell sardines.' I replied, ''Livy, for God's sake, don't let them think down in the city that you are destitute of general information in regard to spelling. How did you spell

sardines?' And she told me. Then I got up and opened the window and picked up her poor little scrap of paper, which she had left on the ledge for the market-boy to take in the morning, on which she had written her wish for extra milk, and a small box of sardines. I brought the bit of paper to the bedside and said, 'Here, Love, is your pen and ink. Just put an "h" at the end of your sardines, then we can both lie down in peace to sleep, and in the morning when the market-man reads your paper, he will know you know how to spell the fish, although the "h" is always silent.' And God forever bless her! she wrote it. But if she ever discovers that in that spelling I was wrong, why, the china and I will fly."

Mr. Howells, in his sketch of Mr. Clemens, says: "It was part of his joke to pretend a violence in that gentlest creature which the more amusingly realized the situation to their friends."

The last evening of that visit in Hartford is as clear and vivid as if the men and women that clustered about the blazing fire in the long red-curtained room that night had not now passed into shadowy phantoms, but lived still sentient with life and happiness.

It was voted at dinner that the company would not disband until the genial morn appeared, and that there should be at midnight a wassail brewed.

The rosy apples roasted at the open fire, the wine and sugar added, and the ale — but at this point Mrs. Clemens said, "Youth, we have no ale." There was a rapid exit by Mr. Clemens, who reappeared in a moment in his historic sealskin coat and cap, but still wearing his low-cut evening shoes. He said he wanted a walk, and was going to the village for the ale and should shortly return with the ingredient. Deaf, absolutely deaf, to Mrs. Clemens's earnest voice, that he should at least wear overshoes that snowy night, he disappeared. In an incredibly short time he reappeared, excited and hilarious, with his rapid walk in the frosty air — very wet shoes, and no cap. To Mrs. Clemens's inquiry, "Youth, what have you done with your cap?" there was a hurried search in all his pockets, a blank and surprised look on his face, as he said: "Why, I am afraid I have thrown it away. I remember being very warm and taking it off, carrying it in my hand, and now I do remember, at such a turn in the road, my hand feeling a strain of position, opening it and throwing away in the darkness something in my hand that caused the sensation." Then, in real anxiety, "'Livy, do you think it could have been my cap?"

Mr. Clemens was sent for George, with Mrs. Clemens's instruction that George should carefully retrace Mr. Clemens's footsteps in the quest for the

mislaid cap, and also to see that Mr. Clemens put on dry shoes. When the culprit returned, the wet low shoes had been exchanged for a pair of white cowskin slippers, with the hair outside, and clothed in them, with most sober and smileless face, he twisted his angular body into all the strange contortions known to the dancing darkies of the South. In this wise the last day of the joyous, jubilant visit came to the close. Untroubled by the flight of time I still can hear a soft and gentle tone, "Youth, O Youth!" for so she always called him.

CHAPTER XV

IN the first years of Mr. Aldrich's marriage, many happy hours were passed in his "Castle in Spain" with European guide-books and itineraries much in evidence, but not until the autumn of 1874 did the plans take definite shape.

> "One dearest sight I have not seen,
> It almost seems a wrong;
> A dream I had when life was new.
> Alas, our dreams! they come not true:
> I thought to see fair Carcassonne —
> That lovely city — Carcassonne!"

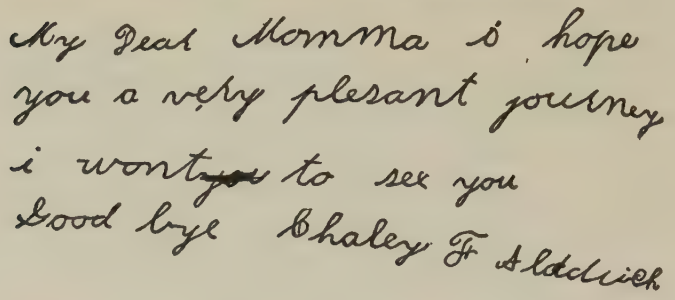
The ocean voyage and the journey in Europe in the seventies was a serious adventure, bringing to the traveller something of the same distinction as that which enshrines the Turkish pilgrim who makes the pilgrimage to Mecca, and by so doing earns the right to have a certain form of turban cut upon his tomb.

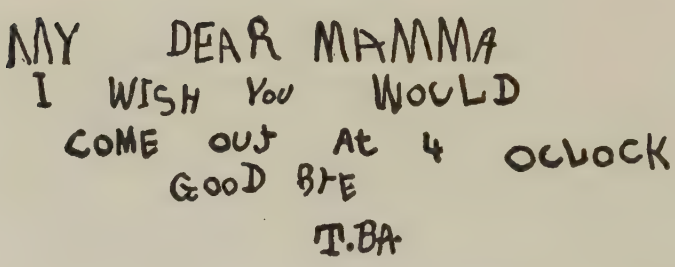
In a drizzling rain-storm on the afternoon of the 24th of March, 1875, we went on board the Cunard steamer Abyssinia.

> "All for adventure in the great New Regions,
> All for Eldorado and to sail the world around."

The hearts of the Adventurers were heavy on that sombre day on which they were outward bound,

for the memory of two little faces and the pressure of warm lips had its insistent pain. The letter of farewell which the jocund sprites indited and sent to the steamer did not serve to lessen the heartache.


My Dear Momma i hope
you a very plesant journey
i wont you to see you
Good bye Thaley F Aldrich


MY DEAR MAMMA
I WISH YOU WOULD
COME OUT AT 4 OCLOCK
GOOD BYE
T.BA

The Abyssinia was one of the largest of the Royal Mail steamships, and although she was but one twelfth of the size of the present Olympic she seemed a Leviathan to our unaccustomed eyes. A small group of friends had come aboard to wish us God-speed and *bon voyage;* of that group none are more distinct in memory than Mr. Bayard Taylor,

who had sent us a box of "Heidsieck," pronouncing it the best cure for *mal de mer*, and insisting that it must be rescued from the steward's care and placed where it would be close at hand. Very clear is the picture of Mr. Taylor, standing in the little cabin (which was much too small for his big body) and engineering with the skill of a general that precious package to a supposedly safe haven under the berth, where it remained unopened, but not unthought of, during its erratic excursions with the steamer trunks and bags, backwards and forwards, the length and breadth of our cabin through the terrible days and hours of that "Ocean Sea."

At the sound of a gong, and the loud call through the ship, "All for the shore," Mr. Taylor hurried back to the cabin with this parting injunction to the venturesome mariner he found there: "Before the ship makes a revolution, go into your berth and stay there for twenty-four hours. By taking a recumbent position the system adapts itself to the motion of the sea, and you will probably escape the disagreeable effect of an uneven keel."

Mr. Taylor's reputation as a traveller was great; there could be no hesitation in accepting the advice; so although it was but two o'clock in the day, the straight and coffin-like berth held its unwilling occupant, and when, soon afterwards, Mr. Aldrich hurried below, saying, "We have started; come up and

see the receding shores," he found tearful eyes, a ship-shape cabin, and everything ready for the siege Mrs. Stowe had foretold. "Don't leave so much as the unlocking of a trunk to be done after sailing. In the few precious moments when the ship stands still, before she weighs anchor, set your house, that is to say your stateroom, as much in order as if you were going to be hanged; place everything in the most convenient position to be seized without trouble at a moment's notice; for be sure in half an hour after sailing, an infinite desperation will seize you in which the grasshopper will be a burden. If anything is in your trunk, it might almost as well be in the sea, for any probability of your getting to it."

The walls of this little cabin in which we were immured were stained a sickening hue of faded mustard yellow, with wavy, zigzag lines of lighter shade intended to represent the natural grain of the wood. Built in the corner of the room was a bracket on which rested a box containing a small oil lamp encased in frosted glass, and giving to the two cabins it was supposed to illuminate a dim, religious light; a wash-stand held a ewer and bowl, decorated with a geometric pattern of dingy brown, and was it for economy's sake that all the china of the ship was identical with the ewers and bowls of the cabin? Two portholes added to the general gloom, the water dashing against them and darkening the little light of

day. But these ills were as nothing against the indescribable scent that took possession of the olfactory nerves and penetrated every fibre of wood in the pristine steamboats. Towels and napkins, cups and saucers, plates and curtains, all were inoculated with an odor so odious "that all the perfumes of Arabia will [could] not sweeten."

Mr. Aldrich had looked forward eagerly to the days on shipboard. He had spent many hours on his uncle's yacht and had been a fair-weather sailor; keen was his disappointment that the chair by his side on deck for the first twenty-four hours would be vacant; frequent were the visits and stirring the tales brought to the coffin-like berth in those first hours. The captain, the passengers, the smoking-room and the deck, the enormous size of the ship, and all the details of the environment; but when the voyager strayed into the dining-hall his imagination was made captive by the splendors of the confectionery art, the castles and turrets, the sweetmeats and cakes; a "bill of fare" had been secured and two earnest plotters conspired as to what viands should descend that evening to the small stateroom. But before the call for dinner was sounded, the occupant of the berth had rescinded her order for the "cakes and ale," substituting a request for tea and toast, and had also urged the stewardess to interview the ship's doctor, and beg the privilege of having the dim

light in the corner continue, a glow-worm through the night, for the ship had begun to rock from side to side with a dizzy, continuous motion that was not at all reassuring.

Long before the sumptuous repast in the dining-saloon was half finished, the tea and toast had been imperatively waved away; abject misery had set in; the only palliative would be Mr. Aldrich's presence, for had he not assured the sufferer that he was never sick at sea, and should she be so unfortunate as to be ill, his days and nights would be devoted to her service? After what seemed months of misery, a phantom bearing an outward semblance to Mr. Aldrich entered the room. The face had grown sharp and thin and deathlike in its pallor; the voice that uttered the words, "I have been so ill," was weak and languid; and then, "If I can live to climb into that upper berth — God pity us both and pity us all." With this, the heroic effort was made, and boots, overcoat, gloves, and hat vanished from sight, and only the creaking and groaning of the boards over her head told the sufferer that the other Adventurer still lived.

For eleven days and nights the agony did not abate. Once in the night a child's voice rang out in the silence, "Oh, Mother, please won't you keep the boat still for just five minutes!" I am sure that all who listened voiced that prayer; but the sea was

obdurate; it had nearly solved the problem of perpetual motion.

In these awful days the blithe and joyous spirit of Mr. Aldrich suffered a temporary eclipse, a sea change into something new and strange. His policy of life became like Iago's: "Demand me nothing: From this time forth I never will speak word!" One sentence did for all his needs: "Don't let that steward speak to me. I want to be let alone. It is hellish!" And so the days and hours passed until at last we came into St. George's Channel, where the sea was beautifully smooth, and we had visions of green fields. Captain Hains sent that evening a peremptory order that the two seats at his table must no longer be vacant. The effort was made, and two wan spectres appeared at the entrance of the dining-saloon. I have a dim remembrance of a way being made for us through a crowd of people sitting on a red-cushioned bench that was built against the side of the ship the entire length of the saloon, the closed ports at regular distances above it. The cushioned bench served for a lounging-place through the day when not occupied as seats at the dining-table. The other side of the table had the ordinary chairs turning on pivots; much more desirable were these chairs than the bench, where one must take the perilous journey over the red cushions, behind the backs of the persons seated thereon, to arrive at the allotted

place. Sometimes the fellow passengers were considerate and moved; sometimes they sat very tight, so that the traverser had to step over a spine or two before sliding down into the waiting place.

There was much laughter and animated talk at the Captain's table that night, Mr. Aldrich having recovered his spirits. I remember an inimitable, funny, whimsically fantastic, speech of his, against the sea, and the very evident disapproval of the English clergyman who sat erect and rigid opposite, and of his finally saying, with much solemnity, "Mr. Aldrich, God made the sea, the sea is His, He made it." "Yes," said Mr. Aldrich, "but He did not like it very well, you will remember, when He was on it, for He got out and walked."

A few hours later the Abyssinia's engines ceased to throb, — the voyage was over. Coming towards us was the little steam tender, the Otter, which the steward pronounced "the Hotter," and said it would soon take us "hoff." A short run up the Mersey River, and then adieu to ship and sea for half a year. There was an enjoyable supper at the North-Western Hotel, in Liverpool, and at midnight we took the train to Chester, the city of which Mr. Hawthorne said, "I felt at last as if I had had a glimpse of Old England. I must go again and again to Chester, for I suppose there is not a more curious place in the world."

"It seems almost an Irish bull to say that one can be in London only once for the first time. In other places you may renew first impressions. A city on the Continent always remains a foreign city to you, no matter how often you visit it; but that first time in London is an experience which can never be made to repeat itself."

Mr. Aldrich has told so delightfully of those first days that I copy from his printed page:

"In London there is a kind of hotel of which we have no counterpart in the United States. This hotel is usually located in some semi-aristocratic side street, and wears no badge of its servitude beyond a large, well-kept brass door-plate, bearing the legend 'Jones's Hotel' or 'Brown's Hotel,' as the case may be; but be it Brown or Jones, he has been dead at least fifty years, and the establishment is conducted by Robinson. There is no coffee-room or public dining-room, or even office, in this hotel; your meals are served in your apartments; the furniture is solid and comfortable, the attendance admirable, the cuisine unexceptionable, and the bill abominable. But for ease, quietness, and a sort of 1812 odor of respectability, this hotel has nothing to compare with it in the wide world. It is here, above all, that you will be brought in contact with Smith.

"It was on our arrival in London, one April afternoon, that the door of what looked like a private

mansion, in Dover Street, was thrown open to us by a boy broken out all over with buttons. Behind this boy stood Smith. I call him simply Smith for two reasons: in the first place, because it is convenient to do so, and in the second place, because that is what he called himself. I wish it were as facile a matter to explain how this seemingly unobtrusive person instantly took possession of us, bullied us with his usefulness, and knocked us down with his urbanity. From the moment he stepped forward to relieve us of our hand-luggage, we were his — and remained his until that other moment, some weeks later, when he handed us our parcels again, and stood statuesque on the doorstep, with one finger lifted to his forehead in decorous salute, as we drove away.

"Smith is a man of about forty, but so unassuming that I do not think he would assume to be so old or so young as that. He is always in evening dress, and wears white cotton gloves, which set your teeth on edge, during dinner service. He is a person whose gravity of deportment is such as to lend seriousness to the coal-scuttle when he replenishes the parlor fire. Smith's respect for you, at least its outward manifestation, is accompanied by a deep, unexpressed respect for himself. He not only knows his own place, but he knows yours, and holds you to it. He can wrap up more pitying disapprobation in a scarcely perceptible curl of his nether lip than another man

could express in a torrent of words. I have gone about London a whole forenoon with one of Smith's thin smiles clinging like a blister to my consciousness.

"Our purpose in London was to see the sights, to visit all those historic buildings and monuments and galleries which were wrested from us by the war of 1776. We were struck, and then began to be appalled, by the accuracy, minuteness, and comprehensiveness of Smith's knowledge of London. It was encyclopædic. He was a vitalized time-table of railroads and coaches and steamboats, a walking, breathing directory to all the shops, parks, churches, museums, and theatres of the bewildering Babylon. He had, stamped on his brain, a map of all the tangled omnibus routes, he knew the best seats in every place of amusement, the exact moment the performance began in each, and could put his finger without hesitating a second on the very virtuoso's collection you wanted to examine. Before we discovered his almost wicked amplitude of information, we used to consult him touching intended pilgrimages, but shortly gave it up, finding that our provincial plans generally fell cold upon him. He was almost amused, one day, at our desire to ascertain the whereabouts of that insignificant house in Cheapside — it is No. 17, if I remember — in which Keats wrote his sonnet on Chapman's Homer. Our New World curiosity as to certain localities which possess no interest

whatever to the Londoner must often have struck Smith as puerile. His protest or his disapproval — I do not know how to name it — was always so evanescent and shadowy that he cannot be said to have expressed it; it was something in his manner, and not in his words — something as vague as a fleeting breath on a window-glass; but it dampened us.

"The earliest part of our acquaintanceship was fraught with mutual perplexities. It was the longest time before we discovered that *ay ill* meant Hay Hill Street, Smith making a single mouthful of it, thus — *ayill*. One morning he staggered us by asking if we would like 'a hapricot freeze' for dessert. We assented, and would have assented if he had proposed iced hippopotamus; but the nature of the dish was a mystery to us, and perhaps never, since the world took shape out of chaos, was there a simple mould of apricot jelly looked forward to in such poignant suspense."

CHAPTER XVI

SOON after our arrival at Brown's, Smith found active use for his highly polished tray. Mr. Aldrich had a number of old and new friends living in London, and many were the notes, letters, and cards that found a temporary resting-place on its bright surface. Among the many notes that were laid there one foggy morning was one which brought to its recipients a throb of nervous excitement that the yellowing paper still retains.

"DEAR MRS. ALDRICH:

"I was greatly disappointed in not finding you at home when I called yesterday. Will you, and Mr. Aldrich, give us the pleasure of your company at dinner, on Sunday next, at eight o'clock? I hope you have no other engagement for that evening. If you are free, and can come to us, we would like to ask Mr. Browning, Mr. Huxley, Mr. Hughes, and a few other friends to meet you. With eager anticipation of soon meeting, believe me,

"Sincerely

"PHŒBE GARNANT SMALLEY"

An affirmative answer to the note was at once dispatched, and during the busy hours of the week

many a tremulous thought was given to the expectant meeting. When the eventful evening came, Smith was sharply catechized as to the exact time it would take a hansom to traverse the distance that lay between Brown's and the Smalleys' residence. There had been serious calculations as to which dress would be more becoming to the wearer — black satin, relieved with light blue, or white brocade, the two being the extent of evening gowns provided for the journey. After the merits of the two had been unduly weighed, the odds were in favor of the white.

Mr. George Washburn Smalley, since his choice of occupation as a newspaper correspondent, had revolutionized the work in his special line, and had become one of the world's leading men, and at this time was an international character, a confidant of diplomats and rulers. Mr. Smalley had made his reputation in our Civil War when his reports were often the first to convey to Washington the news of operations in the field; but it was not entirely as a newspaper correspondent that Mr. Smalley gained his reputation — he was a critic in art, music, and the drama, he had the *entrée* of the highest circles of the social life of England, was the confidant of Gladstone and the intimate of many prominent men on the Continent. It was said in London, if one wished to find the American Embassy, it would

be found at Mr. Smalley's house in Chester Square.

A clock in the distance was striking eight, as Mr. Aldrich, with lighted taper, was endeavoring to decipher under which of the two bells at the right and left of the door would be inscribed, "Visitors"; his imagination had conjured up with appalling horror what the result might be if he should ring the one under which "Servants" was inscribed.

When the "Visitors" bell was found, and rung, there was a long wait, and then suddenly a most impressive vision greeted our waiting eyes: a figure tall and imposing, red velvet waistcoat, flutter of lace, powdered wig, white silk stockings, and diamond buckles on his black shoes. With calm and lordly manner he allowed his eye to glance over the cowed and humble subjects who waited his invitation to enter — perhaps he had overheard the muffled whisper breathed into Mr. Aldrich's ear, "Is it, oh, is it, the King!!"

A deft and pretty maid with practised art took wraps and scarfs, and then the lordly personage waved us towards the stairs. At the landing another royal personage, clothed in equally regal splendor, waved us forward, announcing in stentorian tones: "Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich." It was a large square room, or so it seemed; at the end was an open grate lighted by one piece of cannel coal which burnt with a flickering flame; in front of this flame stood our

host and hostess, two lads in black Eton jackets and white collars (a new costume to our eyes); evidently some misdemeanor had been committed, and the case was under severe examination. The startled expression of Mr. and Mrs. Smalley when our names were called, and the sudden disappearance of the culprits, whose elimination from the scene was much more marvellous than the vanishing of the disappearing lady we had seen and wondered at in "England's Home of Mystery," at a Maskelyne entertainment the night before. An inexpressible something in the atmosphere made us conscious that in some way we had made a misstep, a social error. In our ignorance of London convention we had arrived too soon (why had we not asked Smith?) — not knowing that the hour given for dinner meant the hour of starting, and not the hour for arriving. As Mr. and Mrs. Smalley moved quickly towards us, one glance showed how true had been Mr. Aldrich's description of the charming personality. The same lithe, slender figure, the dark hair and eyes, the white skin, the black satin gown emphasizing its beauty. Her only ornaments were some red and yellow tulips worn at the breast, and which swayed and trembled at her breath, as a lover would. With frank and winning smile she spoke the words of welcome, and as Mr. Aldrich turned to Mr. Smalley, with caressing touch of hand she said, "I am so

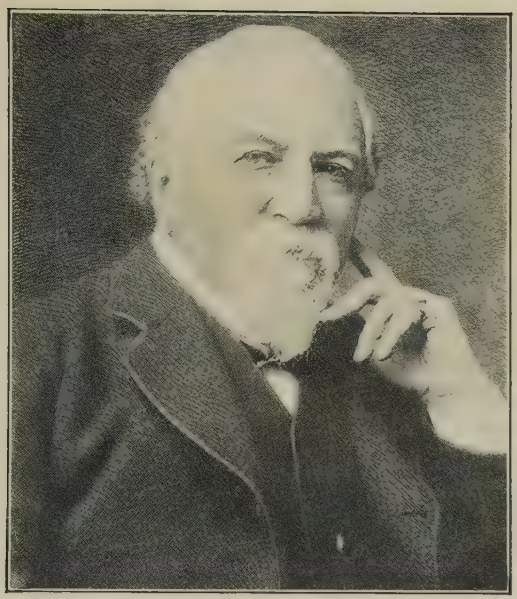
glad you wore white." The words in themselves were simple, but what mysterious and unexplained meaning did they have to the one who spoke them? There was time for a few moments' pleasant talk with host and hostess before the quiet was broken in upon by the stentorian voice at the door, announcing Lord and Lady ——, The Right Honorable Mrs. ——, Mr. and Mrs. ——, the names following hard upon each other, as the bearers made their formal entrance into the drawing-room.

The rapid arrival of the guests gave an uninterrupted moment to ask Mr. Aldrich what could be the unintelligible meaning of the words, "I am so glad you wore white." And also to say, "How lovely she is. How can you bear it?" There was a quick little pressure of the hand that lay near him, as he answered, "By grinding my teeth, and thinking of the twins." For the moment all conversation was suspended by the call of Lady ——, and the breezy entrance of this lady of quality (one of the ladies-in-waiting of the Queen). She wore a bright peacock-blue velvet dress. Her entrance was met by a chorus of voices, all with intonation of great surprise, "Why, Lady ——!" She made a little rush for shelter towards her hostess, whose hand she grasped and held as she said: "I have a dreadful cold, and this gown was the only one I possess that was not very décolleté, and I could not have come,

anyway, if it had not been an American house." Then the hostess of the American house lightly touched her cheek, as she said: "Your dress is of no consequence, dear, it is you, yourself, we want. We all thank you for coming."

The next moment a voice at my ear said, "Mr. Browning begs the privilege of a few words with Mrs. Aldrich before we go to dinner." What paralyzing, unnerving words. Mr. Browning had been the God of my girlish idolatry. Did I not know every word of his "Men and Women," and his "Dramatis Personæ," by heart? Had not these immortal books come a-wooing with my lover, and had we not weighed and pondered over their pages, seeking to pluck out the heart of the mystery — and thought we had, at least to our own satisfaction, if not to those to whom we endeavored to expound our interpretation? And had *he* asked to speak to me! I felt I should "fall at his feet, and adore."

It must have been a death-like face that turned at the sound of his voice. But with the first glance the knees, that had involuntarily bent, stiffened, and my idol fell shattered to the floor. Rising from its place stood a man of medium height, rather robust, full beard, and the perfect air of *savoir-faire* that comes only to the man of society, the man of the world. Nothing in his appearance, excepting the white hair, proclaimed the poet. He was fault-



19. Warwick Crescent, W.
Jan. 23. '79.

Dear Mrs Boughton,

I will dine with you very gladly to-morrow, and shall be happy to see Mr Aldrich — of whom I already know not a little, I believe, from much good writing in the "Atlantic Monthly."

With all regards to Mr Boughton,

believe me yours truly
Robert Browning

lessly dressed; the white waistcoat, the galloon on his trousers, all were of the *dernier cri*. The diamond studs at his breast sparkled and twinkled with mischievous irony, seeming to say: "Ah, simple one, where is your lost Leader now? 'Just for a handful of silver he left us, just for a ribbon to stick in his coat.'" But more disquieting even than the diamond studs was a crush hat, which Mr. Browning carried under his arm, and sat upon through the dinner. The words I had longed to say — all the things I had ached to say — vanished; tears of disappointment were in very slight ambush at the pretty nothings, the subtle flatteries of the poet's talk. Mr. Henry James has said of Mr. Browning: "It was not easy to meet him without some resort to the supposition that he had mastered the secret of dividing the personal consciousness into a pair of independent compartments. The man of the world walked abroad, showed himself, talked, and did his duty. The man of 'Dramatic Lyrics,' of 'Men and Women,' of 'The Ring and the Book,' of 'A Blot on the 'Scutcheon,' of 'Pippa Passes' — this inscrutable personage sat at home and knew, as well he might, in what quarters of that sphere to look for suitable company."

The royal custodian of the door announced another name, and a vision in white, with swaying, undulating motion, came into view. The white robes

enclosed a lady "neither fair nor young," but her diamonds flashed and burned with irradiate light. The lady wore at the waist a long girdle of these precious gems, to which was attached a slender ivory fan. Gently swinging the open fan as she passed Mr. Browning, he moved towards her, and with low obeisance said, "How lovely! *Je vous en fais mon compliment.*" Slowly and softly as the murmur of the summer wind came her floating answer, "Yes, I always mourn in white."

"Come into my parlor, said the spider to the fly,
I have many curious things to show you when you are there."

The fly could bear it no longer, and seeing her host near, made bold to ask, "Please tell me why the men and women here to-night speak so often of the clothes they wear?" Mr. Smalley kindly explained to his guest, who was so ignorant of the etiquette of polite society, that the Court was in mourning (why had not Smith told us?), and to the interrogation of the fly, as to what would have happened if by chance its dress had been blue or yellow, there was no answer other than this, "I see by Mrs. Smalley's eye she is waiting for me to lead the way to dinner"; and as we were (or thought we were) the guests of honor, the simple fly made ready to take the expected arm, but in place of it there was a slight bow and smile, as the arm was offered to the peacock-blue velvet dress. The next moment a tall, slender

man, with refined, intellectual face, said, "Mrs. Aldrich, I am to have the pleasure of taking you in to dinner." And so halfway down a long lane of guests we descended the "winding stair." When we had found our places at the table, my escort, taking his place card, said, "Pray let this be my introduction." The name written on the card was, "Mr. Irving." "Hamlet" was being played at that time, and Mr. Booth had asked us to see and note well Mr. Irving's conception of the character, and how it differed from his own.

Mr. Irving was a charming comrade, and the hour was one of unalloyed enjoyment, with the exception of one antipathy — a man who sat diagonally opposite, and would talk to some other man or woman at the furthermost end of the long table. The man talked well, and all the table listened, excepting those who joined in the discussion — arguing, disputing, laughing. In the middle of a long monologue, the original speaker having the floor, a low voice at my side said, "Do you take violent dislikes to persons you do not know?" Then a pause. "I think you do." To that question, the only answer that could be made were the immortal lines:

"I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."

The low voice continued: "Perhaps you do not know the aliases of Dr. Fell. It is Whistler. You can always recognize him by the white feather —

the little tuft of white in his black hair — the white plume of which Mr. Whistler is very proud."

Of the enchanting hour with Mr. Irving, aside from its gaiety and charm, I have slight memory, with one exception; but so definite and strong is that memory that a mushroom is the magic wand that robs "Sir Henry" of his later glories, and brings him back, a living presence, young and vibrant with dreams, aspirations, ambitions for his much-loved Art.

The menu that night was carefully chosen. One of the delectable dishes was mushrooms, cooked in some peculiar manner — each separate mushroom stood proudly aloof in its own separate bit of toast. Mr. Irving played and toyed with his, until I declared he was a sybarite coquetting with his pleasure, and finely suggested the vegetable was much better warm than cold. Then Mr. Irving, with half-melancholy voice, said: "I cannot eat it. I am an arrant coward. In other things of life I dare do all that may become a man. Liking mushrooms better than any other food, I can master and force my will to put the tempter into my mouth; then a panic forcibly takes possession of me, and I cannot swallow it. Having been placed in this embarrassing predicament many times, I no longer play with fate."

After dinner, when the men returned from the "walnuts and wine," Mrs. Smalley pointed to an

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

empty chair near by, saying, "Mr. Whistler, I know you want to talk with Mrs. Aldrich." If Mr. Whistler did, it must have been subconscious, for outwardly he gave no sign of that desire. Indifferently he advanced, and after a cursory glance, said, "Mrs. Aldrich, won't you come over to the bay window where we will be more away from the world, and can talk?" The talk became at once a monologue, with Mr. Whistler and the women who desired his acquaintance the subject-matter of his discourse. There was one story that still lives in memory. A beautiful lady, who in meeting Mr. Whistler always said, "Ah, Mr. Whistler, won't you come and see me?" And then after frequent meetings the phraseology changed to "Mr. Whistler, why won't you come and see me?"

On a certain Sunday Mr. Whistler was bidden to a tea given by a dear friend who lived at a certain number on a certain road. It was a lovely day, and for some unknown reason Mr. Whistler had an hour or two disengaged and thought he would utilize it by having a cup of tea with his dear friend and her dear friends. Strange to say, although his friend who gave the tea was his dear friend, he had never been to her house. On his arrival at the certain number and the certain street, he was shown by the lackey in waiting to the unoccupied drawing-room where there was no visible sign of tea or guests. Soon he heard

the *frou-frou* of descending skirts, and saw the lady of the entreaties advancing towards him with outstretched hands! She said, "Oh, Mr. Whistler, how good of you, how kind of you to come!" Turning to his listener, Mr. Whistler said, " Mrs. Aldrich, I did not have the heart to tell her that she was indebted for the call to my mistake in the number of a house." It is uncertain if the narrative finished here, or if there was a sequel, as at the moment Mr. Aldrich brought up Mr. Hughes, giving me the pleasure of seeing and talking with "Tom Brown of Rugby."

At the appointed hour, Smith sent a "four-wheeler" for us, and with its arrival the memorable evening came to its close; but in the privacy of our own apartment, when the world was shut out, and our world shut in, Mr. Aldrich was closely questioned — if he was sure, quite, quite sure.

CHAPTER XVII

WITH unwearied interest day after day we sought all parts of the great city — the dream city of our youth. Mr. Henry James, in speaking of London to Mr. Aldrich, said, "It is the heart of the world, and I prefer to be the least whit in its whirl, than to live and own a territory in any other place."

We had gone up and down the Thames on the ordinary river boats, with the incommensurate crowd of people, "who scarcely allow for standing room nor so much as a breath of unappropriated air." We had passed the Tower with its turrets and battlements, caught a glimpse of the arched entrance of the "Traitors' Gate," through which so many unwilling souls had passed on the way to heaven. Through the gray gloom of the English sky had seen that mighty bubble of Saint Paul's, rising out of the mass of innumerable roofs and steeples. Then "Whitefriars" of unsavory fame, the one-time sanctuary and refuge of profligates and sinners. Adjoining Whitefriars we had seen the Temple Gardens, where the partisans of the Houses of York and Lancaster chose the red and the white rose and sent

> ". . . between the red rose and the white
> A thousand souls to death and deadly night."

No roses are blossoming now in the Gardens, but it is still rich in shrubbery and chrysanthemums, the Temple's special flower.

"At the temple one day, Sherlock taking a boat,
The waterman asked him, 'Which way will you float?'
'Which way?' says the Doctor; 'Why fool, with the stream!'
To Saint Paul's or to Lambeth was all one to him."

And so like this Bishop of London we floated with the stream until we made our moorage at Richmond, and our haven at "The Star and Garter." This delightfully situated hotel overlooked the Thames, and had an almost unsurpassed view of the river.

We dined that night in state; every table in the large dining-room has its party of pleasure. The laughter and the champagne, the sparkling ruby burgundy that glowed with the silver and glass, the gay dresses of the women, the soft light of the candles make a picture that lives still warm in memory. The dinner to our little party seemed most lavish in expenditure. It was our first experience of a *table d'hôte*, and as dish after dish, cover after cover was presented, gaily we enjoyed it all, until suddenly a gloom settled on the table, as Mr. Aldrich, with anxious expression, said, "I have only two pounds in my pocket, and I fear this dinner is much exceeding that amount"; and then asked of the other guest the amount of his exchequer. Unhappily the guest's treasury proved a bagatelle, a trifle of shil-

lings and sixpences, absolutely inadequate for any material help towards this dinner of potentates and princes. With this condition of affairs what was to be done? Would any explanation satisfy the reigning monarch, this *maître d'hôtel*, for our lack of shekels, he who so faithfully had hovered about our table with unremittent attention to our comfort, asking at each fresh course, "Est-ce que Monsieur et Madame sont bien servis?" "Désirent-ils autre chose?" With proper pride for our country (for were we not Americans) condescendingly we had bowed to the question and answered, "Tout bien, merci!" And must we fall from this high estate!

The ruby color of the burgundy faded, the jewelled twinkle of the champagne lost its glitter to our eyes, as we discussed the ways and means of the embarrassing situation. The suggestion of the guest that Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich would stay at the hotel for the night, while he would be the Mercury to bring the ducats and relief in the morning, met with scant favor. The decision was ultimately made that the situation should be explained, and that watches, brooches, rings could, if necessary, be left as security, although it was doubtful if their value would equal the cost of the royal repast of "The Star and Garter." Unanimously it was agreed, to "Let Care, the beggar, wait outside the gate," and with this agreement the twinkle again brightened in the champagne, and

the color returned to the ruby wine, and the soft voice of the *maître d'hôtel* still asked, "Monsieur et Madame sont bien servis?"

As a gay party of "Lords and Ladies" entered the room, the *maître d'hôtel*, followed by several of his pages, hurried to a round table, where a large silver *épergne* filled with rare fruit and flowers had been the cynosure of neighboring eyes. The merry party were soon seated, the attendant had bowed lowly, the iced wines in their silver coolers were being placed, when, to the great surprise of one of the insolvent debtors, Mr. Aldrich, rising hastily, approached with outstretched hands and enthusiastic manner these merrymakers, and greeted with genial cordiality the apparent giver of the feast. The procedure was so at variance with Mr. Aldrich's usual modesty and reluctance to intrude, that the one who knew him best sat in amazed silence. There were introductions and a few moments of friendly chat, and then Mr. Aldrich returned to the two, who with excited curiosity waited his coming. "Our *mauvais quart d'heure* is over," he said; "we are saved." The involuntary perspective resuscitator was that adventurous journalist, George Augustus Sala, the special correspondent of the London newspapers — the cosmopolitan, equally at home in all parts of the civilized world. Mr. Sala came to our country at the beginning of the Civil War. The London "Daily

Telegraph" had offered him a thousand pounds for a six months' tour, in the course of which he was to write two letters a week for the "Daily Telegraph." Mr. Aldrich's acquaintance with Mr. Sala was slight. He had dined with him at Mr. Lorimer Graham's, and also at Delmonico's, when Mr. Sala was the guest of Mr. Manton Marble, the editor of the New York "World," and Mr. William Henry Hurlburt, the brilliant "leader writer" of that paper.

At this meeting at "The Star and Garter" all confidence was on the part of Mr. Sala. Mr. Aldrich was as dumb to his monetary affairs, his financial embarrassment, as if he were the Egyptian Sphinx, but he had now cast an anchor to the windward should his frail bark drift too near to coral reefs. Mr. Sala said he was in London incog., as it were; that from the time Doña Isabella had abdicated in favor of her son, Don Alfonso, he had been in Spain as special correspondent for the "Illustrated London News," and that he had left his post for a couple of days only, and was returning to Spain that night. After this meeting with Mr. Sala, where Mr. Aldrich had made his first (and his last) appearance as a politic person, the little dinner went gaily onward until the last dish was served, and the coffee and cigars brought, and with them the small note with its disturbing hieroglyphics, laid face downward by Mr.

Aldrich's plate. Not until the *maître d'hôtel* vanished was the paper turned; it read:

The Star & Garter Hotel
Richmond, Surrey

Dinners £1 4
Wine 15
Carried forward £1 4 15 Total £1.19

All the days in London were a new revelation, a fresh delight. We strolled through the thronged streets without any definite object but the interest and glow of the old names — Ludgate Hill, the Strand, Fleet Street, Temple Bar, Cheapside. The roar of the city, the bustling spectacle of human life, had for us such fascination and attraction that we felt as Hawthorne did about leaving England, "that it seems a cold and shivering thing to go anywhere else," but our destination was Rome, and summer would outspeed us unless we hastened.

The short stay at Chester had increased our desire to visit other cathedral towns. The date of departure was set, and the plan made, when *en route* for Paris, to stop for the night at Canterbury. When the day of exile came, "Smith with smileless face handed us our parcels again, and stood statuesque on the doorstep with one finger lifted to his forehead in decorous salute," as he gave the order, "Victoria Station." Our desire was great to see the cathe-

dral with the almost unequalled windows of the thirteenth century, and the crypts, which were said to be the finest in England.

It was at Canterbury that we made out first acquaintance with the English provincial inn, so immaculate as seen from the outside, with the window-boxes of gay flowers and the shimmer of polished brass; but when the wayfarer had crossed the threshold and inhaled the scent, the stuffy scent, of carpets and of drapery that has hung unwashed and undisturbed for possible centuries, one wonders why anything even so remotely suggestive of water was chosen for the name of this Inn — "The Fountains." The major-domo, who acts as master of the house, seemed, like Pooh Bah of "Mikado" fame, to be all men in one: head waiter, business manager, boots, and chambermaid. This composite official is always clothed in much-worn and shiny evening dress, marked with stains and spots of past ages. He holds in his hands his wand of office, a towel, which is neither unblemished nor pure. Its use is various; to wipe the knives and forks, the plates and glasses, as he hands them to you, or to dust the chairs or your boots.

The multitudinous personage ushered us into a large bedroom on the second floor, filled with beautiful old mahogany chests of drawers, wardrobes, tables, chairs. After our first bird's-eye view of these

splendors, our vision concentrated itself on the wonderfully carved high post bedstead, with its canopy, quilt, and curtains of cardinal red wool. The three steps that led up to its downy billows were also a new wonder to our eyes. The floor of the room was covered with a thick carpet of undistinguishable color, of unsymmetrical design. Through the years that it had lain there undisturbed so many different liquids and solids had been allowed to flow over it, taking no definite form, that it was now impossible to tell if the involved pattern was the result of weave or the careless hand of man, so artfully had time blended them together — "and smelt so!"

Our first walk in this ancient city was to the chemist, to procure all the disinfectants known to modern science, and with them we added one more design to the floor covering, which had more evidence for than against the belief that it was probably made by the Protestant exiles from Flanders and France, when in 1561 Queen Elizabeth permitted them to set up their looms in the crypt of this cathedral.

It was not until the small hours of the night that Morpheus enticed us to his arms. All the early hours were given to the difficult matter of covering the inner surface of the red wool curtains that draped the carven couch with towels, pocket handkerchiefs, bureau scarfs, and every white washable thing that came within our reach, in order that the dust of cen-

turies should not stifle us before the morning dawned.

The next day, unrefreshed from our perilous slumber, we took the train for Dover, had our first sight of the chalk hills, and our first practical knowledge, gained by experience, of the misbehaved and most mischievous Channel.

All things come to an end, and although the passage had been less than two hours, time had multiplied itself in passing. At last the heavy throb of the engine ceased, and we were in Calais, and for the first time heard French (but not our French) spoken all about us. However, our French did well enough to procure us "deux demi-tasses et deux petits verres de cognac," and also we were able to say when we saw it in danger, "Ayez soin de mon carton à chapeaux!"

A delightful car-ride through the beautiful country, and then Paris, and the Hôtel Meurice on the rue de Rivoli, where a perfect dinner and charming suite of rooms in the *entresol* looking on the Tuileries Gardens awaited our coming. Mr. Aldrich so aptly describes our environment in one of his papers "From Ponkapog to Pesth" that I copy it:

"One raw April night, after a stormy passage from Dover to Calais and a cheerless railroad ride thence to Paris, when the wanderers arrived at the rue de Rivoli they found such exquisite preparation for their coming as seemed to have been made by well-

known gentle hands reaching across the Atlantic. In a small salon adjoining the parlor assigned to the party, the wax candles threw a soft light over the glass and silver appointments of a table spread for their repast. A waiter arranging a dish of fruit at the buffet greeted them with a good-evening, as if he had been their servitor for years, instead of now laying eyes upon them for the first time. In the open chimney-place of the parlor was a wood-fire blazing cheerfully on the backs of a couple of brass griffins who did not seem to mind it. On the mantelpiece was an antique clock, flanked by bronze candlesticks that would have taken your heart in a bric-à-brac shop. Beyond this were the sleeping apartments, in the centre of one of which stood the neatest of *femmes de chambre*, with the demurest of dark eyes, and the pinkest of ribbons on her cap. On a toilet-table under a draped mirror was a slender vase of Bohemian glass holding two or three fresh tea-roses. What beau of the old régime had slipped out of his sculptured tomb to pay madame that gallantry?"

Paris is a paradise in the early spring; the young grass is like velvet and every imaginable shade of green lies before one's eyes. In the blossoming of trees and shrubs all nature seems alive — a flush, a glow, freshness and fulness of bloom. What a panorama of happy days unrolls to my vision! Memory becomes a pantograph bringing back again the sweet

spring days, the blue skies, the warm and lovely sunshine, the great branches of lilacs and roses sold at every corner. The life of the streets is so gay and cheering that one must perforce catch the spirit of the flying sunbeams and the mood and temperament of the people. Unfortunately for us, however, there was a slight cloud in our skies — the French language proved itself "the fly in the ointment," the vexatious thorn on the rose.

Before coming to Paris Mr. Aldrich had taken the optimistic view that as he read French with the same fluency as he read English, there could be but little difficulty in both speaking and understanding that language, and was totally unprepared for his precipitous fall when he realized, when surrounded by French voices, that he was both deaf and mute to the speech about him.

Mr. Aldrich was so irritated by his restriction of free speech that it was some time before he would consent to have any light thrown on his gloomy twilight. Our ignorance of French as spoken by the native was not only tiresome but expensive, as we found when we were an hour driving about Paris in our endeavor to locate the Hôtel Bristol; our mischance had named it "Bristol," instead of "Bristall." Although Mr. Aldrich could always correctly write our desires and destination, it was often as difficult for the driver to decipher our English writing as to

understand our Franco-American words. After suffering a few days in this Stygian darkness, Mr. Aldrich applied to Galignani for a teacher of French. In answer to the summons a spinster lady of uncertain summers found her way to our sitting-room in *entresol*, and with formal authority the lessons in French pronunciation began. This mistress of French brought with her a small book entitled:

Le Petit Précepteur
or
First Step to French Conversation
by
F. Grandineau

Late French Master to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. Author of *Conversations familières à l' usage des jeunes demoiselles.*

With Her Most Gracious Majesty for a sponsor, we felt that there could be "no offence in it," and that perhaps "Le Petit Précepteur" might be the one book in the French tongue which the mothers of "*des jeunes demoiselles*" could safely allow their daughters to read — a French lady having told us that it was the misfortune of their literature that there were no books by distinguished authors that would be permissible for the young girl to peruse.

For a week or more the inane lines of "Le Petit Précepteur" were well spoken, "with good accent and good discretion," when unexpectedly out of a clear sky the revolt came.

I have pinched my fingers.
She has knocked her head.
He has dirtied his coat.
The eye is stopped up.
I am so fond of monkeys.
You have torn little Louise's pantalet.

With these lines "Le Petit Précepteur" was closed with a sudden bang, and with the bang French pronunciation was consigned forever to Hades.

Soon after our arrival in Paris, Mr. Aldrich had the pleasure of meeting Madame Thérèse de Solins Blanc, better known by her pen-name, "Th. Bentzon." Madame Blanc had translated and published, in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," "Marjorie Daw," "Mademoiselle Olympe Zabriski," "Père Antoine's Date Palm," and several others of Mr. Aldrich's short stories. Madame Blanc was a writer of distinction, and of rare personal charm. She was the stepdaughter of Comte d'Aure, who was equerry to Napoleon III. Comte d'Aure introduced the young writer to George Sand, and through this friendship Madame Blanc owed the position (which she held for many years) on the "Revue des Deux Mondes." Madame Blanc's novels, especially "Tony," "Constance," and "Un Remords," are far beyond the average, and were crowned by the French Academy, the highest honor to which a French writer can aspire. Madame Blanc brought, on her ceremonial first visit, a beautifully painted small porcelain in the

shape of a heart, which she presented to her hostess with the charming phrase and gracious manner of the old régime, asking that the quaintly carved gold necklace laid inside the box might sometimes be worn, and by wearing bring a remembrance of the giver, who saw now that "no trinket of jewel or gold could add to the grace and charm of the wearer."

> "The wisest of the wise
> Listen to pretty lies,
> And love to hear them told."

Very delightful is the memory of an exquisite dinner the Comtesse d'Aure gave in our honor, with its shadowy glimpse of what the social world, the Court society, must have meant in the days when an Emperor and Empress ruled over France.

CHAPTER XVIII

WITH the dinner which had given us such a pleasing insight of the intimate interior and charm of a true French home, our stay in the beautiful city ended, for spring in the Campagna, with the larks and anemones, called and drew us with insidious claim.

The route from Paris to Lyons led through the lovely valley of the Seine. The entire district through which we passed was for many miles covered with grapevines, the grass by the roadside was green and fresh, and the air full of pleasant earthy odors. Among the flowering shrubs the clematis and red poppy bloomed along the hedges, and over it all were the purple light and shadows that lie upon the distant hills.

"We cannot dream too much of France."

From Lyons our flight was through Marseilles to Nice, and then on to that Garden of Eden, Monaco, that petty principality which is set like a gem between its snow-topped mountains, the rich green foliage, the blue sea, the blue sky, and the red rocks rising so abruptly.

We had *déjeuner* at the Beau Séjour, noted for its fastidious cuisine, then followed the enchanting walk

up the winding avenue, through the tropical gardens filled with palm, lemon, and every other kind of tree, the beds of heliotrope, roses, and violets making the air heavy with the delicious perfume of flowers. In this way we came to the doors of that sinful paradise, Monte Carlo.

In the sumptuous apartments of the *salles de jeu* the six green tables were surrounded by men and women of all ages and estates, watching with vivid interest the turning of the roulette.

Mr. Aldrich placed on one of the green tables a twenty-franc piece and played at "Rouge et Noir." With a joyous unconcern, and a gay little nod to the *croupier* as he staked his napoleon, he said, "Success to it. Vive le Roi." The adjuration was heard by the fickle goddess who watches over this alluring game, for when, after a few turns of the roulette, the napoleon returned to the hand that gave it, it brought with it many followers — gold enough to buy a string of lapis-lazuli beads and a cross of topaz. The next day (one of the party proudly clothed in these wages of sin) our flight continued over the Cornice Road to Genoa. From Genoa through the forty tunnels to Pisa. So frequent are these galleries and tunnels that it almost seemed as if this extraordinary rock roughness, in shaping of timber and stone, was the work of the sea and the storm.

At Pisa we saw within its few acres the four build-

ings, "so fortunate in their solitude and their society," the Cathedral, the Campo Santo, the Baptistry, and the Leaning Tower.

The next day's journey brought us to Rome. We slept that night in the Hôtel de Russie, in the Piazza del Popolo. "Redde, Diana, diem." (Bring back, O Diana, the day.) For the next busy weeks "there were visits to the Catacombs and the Baths of Caracalla, and excursions to the Campagna — at this time of year a vast red sea of poppies strewn with the wrecks of ancient tombs; we had breathed the musky air of Santa Maria Maggiore and the Basilica San Paolo; we had burrowed under the Eternal City in crypt and dungeon, and gazed down upon it from the dizzy Lantern of Saint Peter's. The blighting summer was at hand; the phantasmal malaria was stalking the Campagna at night: it was time to go. There was nothing more to be done in Rome unless we paid a visit to a Certain Old Gentleman.

Mr. Aldrich, in his papers "From Ponkapog to Pesth," has told the story so charmingly that I shall place it here and let it be a twice-told tale:

"It was only after the gravest consideration that we decided to visit a Certain Old Gentleman. There were so many points to be considered. It was by no means certain that a Certain Old Gentleman wanted us to visit him. Though we knew him, in a vague way, to be sure — through friends of ours

who were friends of his — he did not know us at all. Then he was, according to report, a very particular old gentleman, standing squarely on his dignity, and so hedged about by conventional ideas of social etiquette, so difficult of approach, and so nearly impossible to become acquainted with when approached, that it was an audacious thing seriously to contemplate dropping in on him familiarly. . . .

"It comes back to me like the reminiscence of a dream, rather than as the memory of an actual experience, that May afternoon when the purpose first unfolded itself to us. We were sitting in the fading glow of the day on the last of the four marble steps which linked our parlor to the fairy-like garden of the Albergo di Russia in the Via Babuino. Our rooms were on the ground-floor, and this garden, shut in on three sides by the main building and the wings of the hotel, and closed at the rear by the Pincian Hill, up which the garden clambered halfway in three or four luxuriant terraces, seemed naturally to belong to our suite of apartments. All night we could hear the drip of the fountain among the cactus leaves, and catch at intervals the fragrance of orange-blooms, blown in at the one window we dared leave open. It was here we took the morning air a few minutes before breakfast; it was on these steps we smoked our cigar after the wonders of the day were done. We had the garden quite to ourselves,

for the cautious tourist had long since taken wing from Rome, frightened by the early advance of summer. The great caravansary was nearly empty. Aside from the lizards, I do not recollect seeing any living creature in that garden during our stay, except a little frowsy wad of a dog, which dashed into our premises one morning, and seizing on a large piece of sponge made off with it up the Pincian Hill. If that sponge fell to the lot of some time-encrusted Romanese, and Providence was merciful enough to inspire him with a conception of its proper use, it cannot be said of the little Skye terrier that he lived in vain.

"This was our second sojourn in Rome, and we had spent two industrious weeks, picking up the threads of the Past, dropped temporarily in April in order to run down and explore Naples before Southern Italy became too hot to hold us. . . . There was nothing more to be done in Rome unless we did the Roman fever — nothing but that, indeed, if we were not inclined to pay a visit to a Certain Old Gentleman. This alternative appeared to have so many advantages over the Roman fever that it at once took the shape of an irresistible temptation. . . .

"Though the discussion did not end here that May evening on the steps of the hotel-garden, it ends here in my record; it being sufficient for the reader to know that we then and there resolved to undertake the visit in question. The scribe of the party dis-

patched a note to Signor V—— expressing a desire to pay our respects to his venerable friend before we left town, and begging that an early day, if any, be appointed for the interview. Signor V—— was an Italian acquaintance of ours who carried a diplomatic key that fitted almost any lock.

"We breakfasted betimes, the next morning, and sat lingering over our coffee, awaiting Signor V——'s reply to our note. The reply had so impressive an air of not coming, that we fell to planning an excursion to Tivoli, and had ordered a carriage to that end, when Stefano appeared, bearing an envelope on his silver-plated waiter. (I think Stefano was born with that waiter in his hand; he never laid it down for a moment; if any duty obliged him to use both hands, he clapped the waiter under his arm or between his knees; I used to fancy that it was attached to his body by some mysterious, invisible ligament, the severing of which would have caused his instant dissolution.) Signor V—— advised us that his venerable friend would be gracious enough to receive us that very day at one half-hour after noon. In a postscript the signor intimated that the gentlemen would be expected to wear evening dress, *minus* gloves, and that it was imperative on the part of Madama to be costumed completely in black and to wear only a black veil on her hair. Such was one of the whims of a Certain Old Gentleman.

"Here a dilemma arose. Among Madama's wardrobe there was no costume of this lugubrious description. The nearest approach to it was a statuesque black robe, elaborately looped and covered with agreeable arabesques of turquoise-blue silk. There was nothing to do but to rip off these celestial trimmings, and they were ripped off, though it went against the woman-heart. Poor, vain little silk dress, that had never been worn, what swift retribution overtook you for being nothing but artistic, and graceful, and lovely, and — Parisian, which includes all blessed adjectives!

"From the bottom of a trunk in which they had lain since we left London, H—— and I exhumed our dress-coats. Though perfectly new (like their amiable sister, the black silk gown), they came out looking remarkably aged. They had inexplicable bulges in the back, as if they had been worn by somebody with six or eight shoulder-blades, and were covered all over in front with minute wrinkles, recalling the famous portrait of the late Mr. Parr in his hundred and fiftieth year. H—— and I got into our creased elegance with not more intemperate comment than might be pardoned, and repaired to the parlor, where we found Madama arranging a voluminous veil of inky crape over her hair, and regarding herself in a full-length mirror with gloomy satisfaction. The carriage was at the *porte cochère*, and we departed,

stealing silently through the deserted hotel corridor, and looking for all the world, I imagine, like a couple of rascally undertakers making off with a nun. . . .

"Notwithstanding our deliberations over the matter at the hotel, I think I had not fully realized that in proposing to visit a Certain Old Gentleman we were proposing to visit the Pope of Rome. The proposition had seemed all along like a piece of mild pleasantry, as if one should say, 'I think I'll drop round on Titus Flavius in the course of the forenoon,' or 'I've half a mind to look in on Cicero and Pompey, and see how they feel this morning after their little dissipation last night at the villa of Lucullus.' The Pope of Rome — not the Pope *regnant*, but the Pope of Rome in the abstract — had up to that hour presented himself to my mental eye as an august spectacular figure-head, belonging to no particular period, who might turn out after all to be an ingenious historical fiction perpetrated by the same humorist that invented Pocahontas. The Pope of Rome! — he had been as vague to me as Adam and as improbable as Noah.

"But there stood Signor V—— at the carriage-step, waiting to conduct us into the Vatican, and there, on either side of the portals at the head of the massive staircase, lounged two of the papal guard in that jack-of-diamonds costume which Michael Angelo designed for them — in the way of a prac-

tical joke, I fancy. They held halberds in their hands, these mediæval gentlemen, and it was a mercy they did n't chop us to pieces as we passed between them. What an absurd uniform for a man-at-arms of the nineteenth century! These fellows, clad in rainbow, suggested a pair of harlequins out of a Christmas pantomime. Farther on we came to more stone staircase, and more stupid papal guard with melodramatic battle-axes, and were finally ushered into a vast, high-studded chamber at the end of a much-stuccoed corridor.

"Coming as we did out of the blinding sunshine, this chamber seemed to us at first but a gloomy cavern. It was so poorly lighted by numerous large windows on the western side that several seconds elapsed before we could see anything distinctly. One or two additional windows would have made it quite dark. At the end of the apartment, near the door at which we had entered, was a dais with three tawdry rococo gilt armchairs, having for background an enormous painting of the Virgin, but by what master I was unable to make out. The draperies of the room were of some heavy dark stuff, a green rep, if I remember, and the floor was covered with a thick carpet through which the solid stone flagging beneath repelled the pressure of your foot. There was a singular absence of color everywhere, of that mosaic work and Renaissance gilding with

which the eyes soon become good friends in Italy. The frescoes of the ceiling, if there were any frescoes, were in some shy neutral tint, and did not introduce themselves to us. On the right, at the other extremity of the room, was a double door, which led, as we were correct in supposing, to the private apartments of the Pope.

"Presently our eyes grew reconciled to the semi-twilight, which seemed to have been transported hither with a faint spicy odor of incense from some ancient basilica — a proper enough light for an audience-chamber in the Vatican. Fixed against the wall on either side, and extending nearly the entire length of the room, was a broad settee, the greater part of which was already occupied when we entered.

"A cynic has observed that all cats are gray in the twilight. He said cats, but meant women. I am convinced that all women are not alike in a black silk dress, very simply trimmed and with no color about it except a white rose at the corsage. There are women — perhaps not too many — whose beauty is heightened by an austere toilette. Such a one was the lady opposite me, with her veil twisted under her chin and falling negligently over the left shoulder. The beauty of her face flashed out like a diamond from its sombre setting. She had the brightest of dark eyes, with such a thick, long fringe of dark eyelashes that her whole countenance turned into

night when she drooped her eyelids; when she lifted them, it was morning again. As if to show us what might be done in the matter of contrasts, nature had given this lady some newly coined Roman gold for hair. I think Eve was that way — both blonde and brunette. My *vis-à-vis* would have been gracious in any costume, but I am positive that nothing would have gone so well with her as the black silk dress, fitting closely to the pliant bust and not losing a single line or curve. As she sat, turned three quarters face, the window behind her threw the outlines of her slender figure into sharp relief. The lady herself was perfectly well aware of it.

"Next to this charming person was a substantial English matron, who wore her hair done up in a kind of turret, and looked like a lithograph of a distant view of Windsor Castle. She sat bolt upright, and formed, if I may say so, the initial letter of a long line of fascinatingly ugly women. Imagine a row of Sphinxes in deep mourning. It would have been an unbroken line of feminine severity, but for a handsome young priest with a strikingly spiritual face, who came in, like a happy word in parenthesis, halfway down the row. I soon exhausted the resources of this part of the room; my eyes went back to the Italian lady so prettily framed in the embrasure of the window, and would have lingered there had I not got interested in an old gentleman

seated on my left. When he came into the room, blinking his kindly blue eyes and rubbing his hands noiselessly together and beaming benevolently on everybody, just as if he were expected, I fell in love with him. His fragile, aristocratic hands appeared to have been done up by the same *blanchisseuse* who did his linen, which was as white and crisp as an Alpine snow-drift, as were also two wintry strands of hair artfully trained over either ear. Otherwise he was as bald and shiny as a glacier. He seated himself with an old-fashioned, courteous bow to the company assembled, and a protesting wave of the hand, as if to say, 'Good people, I pray you, do not disturb yourselves,' and made all that side of the room bright with his smiling. He looked so clean and sweet, just such a wholesome figure as one would like to have at one's fireside as grandfather, that I began formulating the wish that I might, thirty or forty years hence, be taken for his twin brother; when a neighbor of his created a disturbance.

"This neighbor was a young Italian lady or gentleman — I cannot affirm which — of perhaps ten months' existence, who up to the present time had been asleep in the arms of its *bonne*. Awakening suddenly, the *bambino* had given vent to the shrillest shrieks, impelled thereto by the strangeness of the surrounding features, or perhaps by some conscientious scruples about being in the Vatican. I picked

out the mother at once by the worried expression that flew to the countenance of a lady near me, and in a gentleman who instantly assumed an air of having no connection whatever with the baleful infant, I detected the father. I do not remember to have seen a stronger instance of youthful depravity and duplicity than that lemon-colored child afforded. The moment the nurse walked with it, it sunk into the sweetest of slumber, and peace settled upon its little nose like a drowsy bee upon the petal of a flower; but the instant the *bonne* made a motion to sit down, it broke forth again. I do not know what ultimately befell the vocal goblin; possibly it was collared by the lieutenant of the guard outside, and thrown into the deepest dungeon of the palace; at all events it disappeared after the announcement that his Holiness would be with us shortly. Whatever virtues Pius IX possessed, punctuality was not one of them, for he had kept us waiting three quarters of an hour, and we had still another fifteen minutes to wait.

"The monotonous hum of conversation hushed itself abruptly, the two sections of the wide door I have mentioned were thrown open, and the Pope, surrounded by his cardinals and a number of foreign princes, entered. The occupants of the two long settees rose, and then, as if they were automata worked by the same tyrannical wire, sunk simulta-

neously into an attitude of devotion. For an instant I was seized with a desperate desire not to kneel. There is something in an American knee, when it is rightly constructed, that makes it an awkward thing to kneel with before any man born of woman. Perhaps, if the choice were left one, either to prostrate one's self before a certain person or be shot, one might make a point of it — and be shot. But that was not the alternative in the present case. And so I slid softly down with the rest of the miserable sinners. I was in the very act, when I was chilled to the marrow by catching a sidelong glimpse of my benign old gentleman placidly leaning back in his seat, with his hands folded over his well-filled waistcoat and that same benevolent smile petrified on his countenance. He was fast asleep.

"Immediately a tall, cadaverous person in a scant, funereal garment emerged from somewhere, and touched the sleeper on the shoulder. The old gentleman unclosed his eyes slowly and with difficulty, and was so far from taking in the situation that he made a gesture as if to shake hands with the tall, cadaverous person. Then it all flashed upon the dear old boy, and he dropped to his knees with so comical and despairing an air of contrition that the presence of forty thousand popes would not have prevented me from laughing.

"All eyes were now turned toward the Pope and

his suite, and this trifling episode passed unnoticed save by two or three individuals in the immediate neighborhood, who succeeded in swallowing their smiles, but did not dare glance at each other afterwards. The Pope advanced to the centre of the upper end of the room, leaning heavily on his ivory-handled cane, the princes in black and the cardinals in scarlet standing behind him in picturesque groups, like the chorus in an opera. Indeed, it was all like a scene on the stage. There was something premeditated and spectacular about it, as if these persons had been engaged for the occasion. Several of the princes were Russian, with names quite well adapted to not being remembered. Among the Italian gentlemen was Cardinal Nobli Vatteleschi — he was not a cardinal then, by the way — who died not long ago.

"Within whispering distance of the Pope stood Cardinal Antonelli — a man who would not escape observation in any assembly of notable personages. If the Inquisition should be revived in its early genial form, and the reader should fall into its hands — as would very likely be the case, if a branch office were established in this country — he would feel scarcely comfortable if his chief inquisitor had so cold and subtle a countenance as Giacome Antonelli's.

"It was a pleasure to turn from the impassible

prime minister to the gentle and altogether interesting figure of his august master, with his small, sparkling eyes, remarkably piercing when he looked at you point-blank, and a smile none the less winsome that it lighted up a mouth denoting unusual force of will. His face was not at all the face of a man who had passed nearly half a century in arduous diplomatic and ecclesiastical labors; it was certainly the face of a man who had led a temperate, blameless private life, in noble contrast to many of his profligate predecessors, whom the world was only too glad to have snugly stowed away in their gorgeous porphyry coffins with a marble mistress carved atop.

"After pausing a moment or two in the middle of the chamber, and taking a bird's-eye glance at his guests, the Pope began his rounds. Assigned to each group of five or ten persons was an official who presented the visitors by name, indicating their nationality, station, etc. So far as the nationality was involved, that portion of the introduction was obviously superfluous, for the Pope singled out his countrymen at a glance, and at once addressed them in Italian, scarcely waiting for the master of ceremonies to perform his duties. To foreigners his Holiness spoke in French. After a few words of salutation he gave his hand to each person, who touched it with his lips or his forehead, or simply

retained it an instant. It was a deathly cold hand, on the forefinger of which was a great seal ring bearing a mottled gray stone that seemed frozen. As the Pope moved slowly along, devotees caught at the hem of his robe and pressed it to their lips, and in most instances bowed down and kissed his feet. I suppose it was only by years of practice that his Holiness was able to avoid stepping on a nose here and there.

"It came our turn at last. As he approached us he said, with a smile, 'Ah, I see you are Americans.' Signor V—— then presented us formally, and the Pope was kind enough to say to us what he had probably said to twenty thousand other Americans in the course of several hundred similar occasions.

"His Holiness then addressed to his guests the neatest of farewells, delivered in enviable French, in which he wished a prosperous voyage to those pilgrims whose homes lay beyond the sea, and a happy return to all. When he touched, as he did briefly, on the misfortunes of the church, an adorable fire came into his eyes; fifty of his eighty-three winters slipped from him as if by enchantment, and for a few seconds he stood forth in the prime of life. He spoke some five or seven minutes, and nothing could have been more dignified and graceful than the matter and manner of his words. The benediction was followed by a general rustle and movement

among the princes and *eminenze* at the farther end of the room; the double door opened softly, and closed — and that was the last the Pope saw of us."

There was still one more visit to be made before we set off upon our northern flight — to stand again by the tomb that held the heart of Shelley, to bend the knee at the grave of Keats.

> "Within the shadow of the Pyramid
> Of Caius Cestius was this daisy found,
> White as the soul of Keats in Paradise.
> The pansy — there were hundreds of them, hid
> In the thick grass that folded Shelley's mound,
> Guarding his ashes with most lovely eyes."

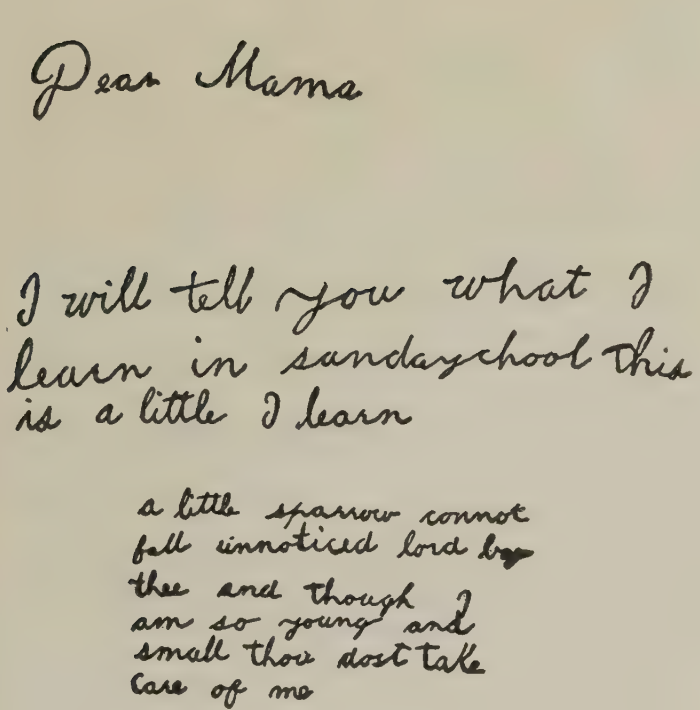
This visit paid, with a homesick sinking of the heart we drank our last bottle of Lacrima Christi, loosened the cords that bound us to the Eternal City, and turned our faces eastwards as far as Vienna and Budapest; went along the Thone, and spent the summer in the cathedral towns of England until September, when we gladly embarked on the Cunard ship Scythia for home and the jocund sprites, whose letters of recall met us at Liverpool.

"Dear Mama

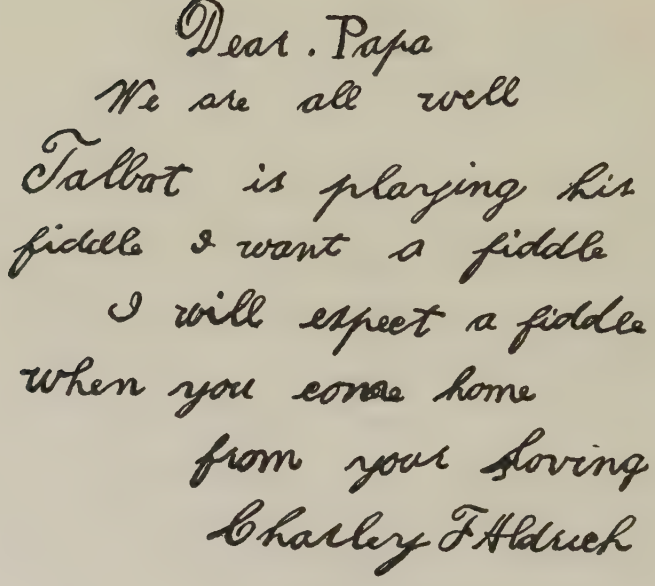
"I will tell you what I learn in Sunday school this is a little I learn

"a little sparrow cannot
fall unnoticed lord by
thee and though I

am so young and
small thou dost take
care of me
"I cannot write any longer good by
from your Dear
"Talbot."


Dear Mama
I will tell you what I
learn in sandayschool this
is a little I learn
a little sparrow connot
fall unnoticed lord by
thee and though I
am so young and
small thou dost take
Care of me

"Dear Papa
"We are all well.
Talbot is playing his fiddle I want a fiddle I will expect a fiddle when you come home
"from your loving
"Charley F. Aldrich."



CHAPTER XIX

VICTOR HUGO'S famous line — "Depart with a tear, enter with a smile" — well expressed the tenor of our minds as we set sail from Queenstown, homeward-bound. The waiting hearts and the bright eyes of the jocund sprites were the beacon lights in our ocean highway, deadening the cruelties of the implacable seas that made the rolling ships of that day an abiding-place of misery.

In answer to a note of welcome from Mr. Stedman soon after his arrival, Mr. Aldrich wrote:

"I have had a very rich six months. I am quite certain that whatever I do in future will bear the impress of that wider experience. I had to laugh over the cutting you enclosed from the Rev. Talmage's paper — the idea of my being, even indirectly, of any assistance to a 'Christian at work,' gave me a curious and novel sensation of unexpected usefulness!"

Mark Twain's cordial letter of welcome ended, "God knows we are glad to have you back, but don't talk!" To Mr. Fields, Mr. Aldrich wrote, "We enjoyed keenly every moment, and I have come back chockful of mental intaglios and Venetian glass and literary bric-à-brac generally."

The pomegranate seed of recollected travel which first bore flower was the lovely imaginative story of the "Bambino d'Ara Cœli." The summer afternoon passed in this ancient church is still so vivid that I almost hear again Mr. Aldrich's voice. As we sit under the golden ceiling, the faint perfume of incense about us, Mr. Aldrich with magic touch brings to my vision the world of people that crowded this vast and solemn space — the triumphal procession of emperors and generals, senators and idlers, priests and monks, all took shape again, and from the Sacristy, on flights of prayer, the holy Bambino floated on celestial wings.

> "How it comes back, that hour in June
> When just to exist was joy enough.
> I can see the olives, silvery gray,
> The carven masonry, rich with stains,
> The gothic windows and lead-set panes,
> The flag-paved cortile, the convent gates."

Leaving the church, we walked to the fountain of Trevi for a parting draught of this precious water, for the tradition is still believed that to partake of its glistening drops insures the traveller's return to Rome. There is scarcely a busier scene in Rome than the neighborhood of this fountain. As we stood for a moment and watched the wandering traffic, a sudden silence fell as old men, young men, women and children dropped to their knees as a procession of priests came in view, carrying on a raised dais

the miraculous Bambino, to work its miracle at the bedside of the sick and dying. Devout peasants and others not so devout always kneel as the Blessed Infant passes, swathed in its white dress encrusted with diamonds and rubies, with which the brands plucked from the burning have endowed the little black figure of wood. The veneration and awe, the adoring love portrayed on the faces of those who knelt gave Mr. Aldrich the *motif* for the poem which he wrote soon after his return.

THE LEGEND OF ARA CŒLI

Whoever will go to Rome may see
In the Chapel of the Sacristy
Of Ara Cœli, the Sainted Child —
Garnished from throat to foot with rings
And brooches and precious offerings.

. . . . . .

It has its minions to come and go,
Its perfumed chamber, remote and still,
Its silken couch and its jewelled throne,
And a special carriage of its own
To take the air in, when it will;

. . . . . .

Often some princess, brown and tall,
Comes, and unclasping from her arm
The glittering bracelet, leaves it, warm
With her throbbing pulse, at the Baby's feet.

In a letter to Mr. Howells, Mr. Aldrich writes of this narrative poem: "The bare story I know is lovely and sufficient. Of the art I cannot judge now.

I took the greatest pleasure in writing it, and my savage critic says she thinks it 'the best poem I have ever written — or will write.' I hope she is a good judge and no prophetess!"

The two years following the home-coming were uneventful of incidents, Mr. Aldrich returning with fresh interest to his poems and sketches. The summers were passed at Lynn Terrace, the winters divided between Boston and Ponkapog, with occasional visits to New York, that city still holding the old-time habit of its citizens condensing the formal and social calls of the coming year into the one day — "New Year's Day." The custom of paying visits was so universal that months beforehand, unless one chose to walk, carriages must be engaged, the price of which was often as high as fifty dollars for a few hours. The ladies in receiving wore their prettiest dresses and choicest smiles, all keeping notebooks in which the number of calls was marked, and serious was the rivalry between the houses of Montague and Capulet as to which, at the end of the day, could show the larger plurality of names. Banks and offices were closed, the day being given over to this social function. Each house had its table of generous viands, a punch was brewed, and for special guests champagne corks flew with generous prodigality. Mr. and Mrs. Stedman invited Mr. Aldrich to come to New York for this day and share in the pleasure

ALDRICH AT LYNN TERRACE

of meeting their mutual friends. Mrs. Stedman unfortunately did not always rise to the heights on which her husband stood. She was, however, a most kind and loyal friend, who answered truly and with plain speaking that was the antithesis of Mr. Stedman's tact. I remember well on this occasion the ruthful and perplexed expression of a caller's face as he said, in making his adieux, "I am taking flight; I am out of my element, out of my place even in breathing the air among so many distinguished men as I have left in the other room." The reply must at least have been unexpected to the speaker: "Oh, you must not mind that, Mr. Blank, for we really do know many persons who are not distinguished!!!"

Another amusing memory of the day is of Mr. Edgar Fawcett, a young poet who was much in evidence, and who took himself very seriously, and the introduction to him of a typical New York banker, or bishop, perhaps, who said, "Ah, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Edgar Fawcett? I remember seeing your name in the corners of newspapers, attached to poems, pretty little poems, too, I thought them." Said Mr. Fawcett, with becoming humility, "Oh, they are small flights, not worth speaking about." Thereupon the banker, or bishop, touched him encouragingly on the shoulder, saying, "Oh, well, never mind, you will likely do better next time."

In a letter written to Mr. Stedman in 1878 Mr.

Aldrich writes: "I have had a wholly delightful and nearly idle summer at Swampscott, and am now back again among the Blue Hills and hard at work. Am three chapters deep in a novel of different cast from any fiction I have attempted lately — tragedy this time — I am going to get my humor a set of sables." The end of the year was much saddened by the death of Mr. Taylor. In November, Mr. Aldrich had written Mr. Stedman, "I have a presentiment he will never return." On December 20, Mr. Aldrich writes again to Mr. Stedman: "I cannot speak or write about it. It gave me such a shock in the solitude here. It was at the supper-table last night. I was laughing as I unfolded 'The Tribune,' and then I read, 'Bayard Taylor dead.' I shall be in New York all day on the 7th of January. We sail on the 8th on the Abyssinia, and I want a quiet half-hour's talk with you somewhere, if it can be arranged." The lure of the glistering drops of the fountain of Trevi had worked their charm and proved the tradition true, that those who drink of its waters will return.

Mr. Aldrich sailed for Europe the first week of the New Year, 1879. And although "our bark was ready, the winds were not fair." The Abyssinia was obliged to anchor for the night, making until noon of the next day the meagre distance of thirty-seven miles. We arrived at Liverpool on the eleventh day from New York. The memory of the blazing wood fire that

greeted us in the large hall of the North-Western Hotel burns still in memory as brightly as on that unforgettable night when to be again on land was a foretaste of heaven. Spain was the objective point of the journey:

"Behind me lie the idle life and vain,
The task unfinished and the weary hours!
The long wave softly bears me back to Spain
And the Alhambra's towers."

London was bitterly cold and cheerless with its fogs, Paris little better. We hurried on, making short stops at Orleans, Blois, Angers, Nantes, Bordeaux, Paris, Biarritz to Bayonne, where we saw the advertisements hung up in the hotels of approaching bull-fights, and knew by this that the boundary line was all that separated us from the country of romance, of troubadours, of feathery palms and tall cypresses, fountains, rich Moorish gateways and palaces, Moorish domes so light they seem but resting clouds:

"Place of forgotten kings,
With fountains that never play,
And gardens where day by day
The lonely cicada sings.

"Traces are everywhere
Of the dusky race that came
And passed like a sudden flame,
Leaving their sighs in the air!"

We entered Spain at Irun, the western extremity

of the Pyrenees, arriving late in the evening at Burgos, and wasting most of the night in trying to persuade the proprietor of the Fonda del Norte to procure for our beds some fresh linen. There were no sheets or blankets. The covering of the beds consisted of huge cushions or beds, encased in a bag that once was white, but from age and usage had ceased to have any definite color and was a mixture of all combined.

The old city of Burgos was founded in the ninth century as a protection against the Moors. It was the capital of Castile until Charles V made Madrid the metropolis. Madrid had for Mr. Aldrich a double pleasure — the treasures of the galleries and the renewed friendship with Mr. Lowell, who had been appointed Minister to Spain the year before. In Mr. Greenslet's most interesting book, "James Russell Lowell, His Life and Work," he quotes a letter written to Thomas Hughes, which is so in the spirit of what Mr. Lowell said to Mr. Aldrich, that I copy it:

"I had a hard row to hoe at first! All alone, without a human being I had ever seen before in my life, and with unaccustomed duties, feeling as if I were beset with snares on every hand, obliged to carry on the greater part of my business in a strange tongue — it was rather trying for a man with so sympathetic and sensitive a temperament as mine, and I don't

much wonder the gout came upon me like an armed man."

In memory I can see Mr. Lowell standing with his hand on a chair, and the mischievous twinkle in his brown eyes as he said: "Think of the ridiculous situation. I, who thought of myself as one fully proficient and skilled in the Spanish language, knew so little of its colloquial form that when a man came into my office I did not know how to ask him to take a chair and sit down." Then with a deeper twinkle of the eye, he added — "I could have asked him in old Spanish, though, and had the advantage." Mr. Lowell was very amusing in speaking of his experience with ex-President Grant. Mr. Lowell said that, when he was still baffled with his unaccustomed duties and hedged about with the rigidity of Spanish etiquette, word was sent to him that General Grant, accompanied by his wife and son, were to visit Madrid. The question as to what dignity or form in his reception should be conceded to General Grant had given most of the European Cabinets much tribulation. Spain averted the embarrassing situation by deciding that General Grant should be received as a great Commander. A large dinner was given to General Grant, but after the long lapse of years it escapes my memory if the American Minister was the host of that evening, or the Spanish Government. But the twinkling eye does not escape my memory,

as Mr. Lowell told of his amusement and great satisfaction in the perfect attitude of Mrs. Grant, who was seated between two diplomats, a Frenchman and a Spaniard. Mr. Lowell said Mrs. Grant did not speak either French or Spanish, but there was not an interval during that dinner in which she was not listening, apparently with rapt attention, or replying, with continuous conversation, to their uncomprehended remarks. Mr. Lowell said, "I don't know what she was saying, it may have been the Lord's Prayer, or Longfellow's poem 'Excelsior,' or the Declaration of Independence; but to the guests at the table she gave the pleasant appearance of being delightfully entertained and entertaining." The two diplomats proved equal to the occasion, and the complaisant triangle of *three* diplomats moved smoothly on to the end of the dinner.

In one of Mr. Aldrich's papers in "From Ponkapog to Pesth," he writes of this year's journey:

"A visit to Tangier was not down in my itinerary at all, but on reaching Gibraltar after prolonged wandering through the interior of Spain, Africa threw itself in my way, so to speak, and I have a rare advantage over everybody who has ever visited that country and written about it. I remained there only one day — the standpoint from which I view the Dark Continent is thus unique. . . ."

Leaving Africa, "the spirit in our feet" led us to

Malaga, Granada, Cartagena, Almeria, Alicante, Valencia, Tarragona, and Barcelona, where we left Spain for France and Carcassonne, the city Mr. Lowell had urged us to visit, considering it the finest specimen of a walled town.

"They tell me every day is there
Not more or less than Sunday gay;
In shining robes and garments fair
The people walk upon their way.
One gazes there on castle walls
As grand as those of Babylon,
A bishop and two generals!
What joy to be in Carcassonne!
Ah! might I but see Carcassonne!"

Leaving Carcassonne, we made a "Little Tour" through France and Italy, drinking again the magic drops of the fountain of Trevi. From Rome we went to the Italian Lakes, and on to Paris, where Mr. Clemens awaited our coming. He had most comfortably ensconced his family at the Hotel Normandy, and was himself very busily engaged in wrestling with the French language, which he said was illiterate, untenable, unscrupulous, for if the Frenchman knew how to spell he did not know how to pronounce — and if he knew how to pronounce he certainly did not know how to spell. How it all comes back and springs to memory — the wit, the chaff, the merry dinners in the rue de l'Eschelle, the gaiety and laughter! Mr. Clemens said, "When Aldrich speaks

it seems to me he is the bright face of the moon, and I feel like the other side." A dinner which the Comtesse d'Aure and Madame Blanc gave to Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Clemens is still, to the only survivor of that happy hour, most clear and vivid. For some forgotten reason Mrs. Clemens could not accept her invitation. Manifold were her requests and instructions to her dear "Youth," to hold indelibly in his mind the etiquette of a dinner in polite society in France — not to allow it to slip from his mind for a second that he was dining in "royal circles," and that mentally he must nail himself to his chair, and resist all inclination to rise before the dinner was half over and take his usual promenade round and round the table.

It was arranged that we should call for Mr. Clemens. Mrs. Clemens, in consigning her charge to my care, said, "If you see the slightest preparation on Mark's part to rise from his chair before the dinner is finished, pray stop him, for if left to himself he will forget he is not at dinner at home." It was a brilliant dinner. Everything went smoothly and well, until suddenly, without any premonitory symptoms whatever, Mr. Clemens, uprising from his chair and with perfect unconsciousness, began his rapid promenade round and round the table, holding his large white napkin in his hand and using it as an Admiral might his flag, were he making code signals to his squadron. Suddenly remembrance came — the fur-

West House,
Campden Hill Road, W

Mar. 17th 1883

My dear Wilson
I enclose note to
Aldrich - of course you
must take the risk of its being
practically your - damnation
Yours hopefully
G. H. Boughton

tive and delinquent look to his chaperon — the quick descent to the vacant chair — are the white stones in that day's memory.

Before we set sail for home, there was a short stay in London, in the pleasant May days:

"It's lilac time in London, it's lilac time in London."

The short stay was made more delightful with the pleasant meeting of old and new friends. Memory gives back a summer afternoon, and the coming of Mr. Henry James, who had elected, as he said, "to be a unit in this great city," and although his share would be infinitesimal, he still could claim that he was part of this great heart of the world.

Mr. James was most interesting with his experiences of the London life as it presented itself — he had become familiar with society and no longer resented going down to dinner the last of the long line and with the least attractive lady on his arm, but not a lady of quality; he must content himself with plain "Mrs.," he said. Titles were for his betters. Mr. James told an amusing anecdote of taking tea with Mrs. Millais, and of Mr. Ruskin being one of the guests, Mrs. Millais asking Mr. Ruskin, with an adorable smile, "Do you take one or two lumps of sugar in your tea? I have forgotten."

There was a delightful renewal of old friendship with Mr. George Boughton, Royal Academician

and charming artist. Mr. Comyns Carr, in sketching Mr. Boughton, said, "He achieved in England a deservedly high place among his comrades — he was a man of fine taste and delicate perception both in the region of art and in the broader field of literature." Mr. and Mrs. Boughton, before they built their house upon Campden Hill, had begun to be known as accepted hosts by a large body of artistic society. In later days the big studio at Campden Hill became the scene of many joyous entertainments. Mr. Browning was a constant guest at the Boughtons' dinners, and the house became a meeting-place for nearly all who were interested in art.

On our arrival in London, we were invited to a fancy-dress ball, given by Mr. and Mrs. Boughton to inaugurate a new studio. At first the invitation was declined, we having no costumes and little time or inclination to procure them. Mr. Boughton was most insistent upon our coming, and as insistent that his "studio effects" could furnish every costume needed. Finally he took the ground of our excuse from under our feet by sending to our hotel a gown of yellow satin, brocaded with silver leaves and flowers, and all the appointments complete for a Lady of Quality of the Watteau period. A note accompanied the Pandora box, which read something in this wise, "A red rose in your powdered hair, a

touch of rouge on your cheek, and I 'kneel at your feet and adore!' '

There was nothing to be done but to yield and send for a coiffeur. When the evening came, the red rose was put in the powdered, puffed, and ringleted hair, the cheeks were rouged, and the slight figure put into the brocaded gown. The coiffeur took his ducats and departure, and the Lady of Quality met with disaster. Mr. Aldrich did not like the "monumental pomp" of the white hair, and with much disappointment he so expressed himself. In theatrical parlance there was a "quick change" — the powder was brushed from the blonde hair, the plain black silk dress, whose azure trimmings had been sacrificed in the visit to the Pope the year before, replaced the satin brocade, and with the added accessories of a tortoise-shell comb and fan it was hoped the wearer might be labelled in the passing crowd — "Spanish Lady."

"Held by a silver dart,
The mantilla's delicate lace
Falls each side of her face
And crossway over her heart —
. . . . . .
This is Pepita —"

who, Mr. Aldrich said, "looked much neater and completer."

When we arrived at Mr. Boughton's we found the

hall and stairway quite blocked by a figure in full armor on the stairs, a policeman and several knights and cavaliers vainly trying to move it. The armor was heavy and unwieldy, the man inside helpless, as the hinges in the armor over the knees had become rusty or caught in some way and would not bend. The unfortunate prisoner was Mr. William Black, whose portrait in this same armor was painted afterwards and now hangs in the Glasgow Gallery. Mr. Macmillan, the London publisher, took the Spanish Lady to supper, which was served at small tables. Mr. Macmillan had selected for his costume the simple one of a white linen coat, white apron, and cap of a chef. Unfortunately the make-up was so realistic that it came dangerously near to his undoing.

Mr. Macmillan, having secured a small table and an unopened bottle of champagne, went in quest of sweetbreads and truffles. Almost instantly a man in the garb of a monk, with a slight bow to the lady in waiting, took the champagne to a table near by, where a party of four much enjoyed it. Mr. Macmillan returned, with his sweetbreads and truffles, and went again in quest of champagne. The room was very crowded, and it was with difficulty that a guest could get near to the serving-table; but by a strategic movement Mr. Macmillan was returning victorious, when a Troubadour barred his progress,

WILLIAM BLACK
PAINTED BY JOHN PETTIE, R.A.
1877

and with scant ceremony reached forth his hand and said, "I will take that bottle" — and took it, leaving Mr. Macmillan in such a paralyzed state that before he recovered motion the Troubadour was lost in the crowd. The third attempt was successful, and the wine brought in triumph to the table where the sweetbreads and truffles had become quite cold. Mr. Macmillan had poured a glass of the sparkling beverage for the Spanish Lady, and was about to pour one for himself, when two beings from opposite sides of the room, Faust and King Charles, by their dress, advanced quickly and said in one breath — "Give me that bottle." King Charles, begging pardon of Faust, said, "I have the first claim." Faust replied, "I beg your pardon, I spoke first." Thereupon a heated discussion was ushered in, until Mr. Macmillan said, with firm determination in his tone, "Gentlemen, you will neither one of you have this bottle" — whereupon the battle became two against one, the Scholar and the King making common cause. The surprise of the listeners was extreme when the King said: "How dare you speak to a gentleman in that tone? Go back to the kitchen where you belong. You must be drunk. I shall report you to Mr. Boughton." The cook's cap and apron were too realistic, and notwithstanding apologies and explanations, Mr. Macmillan was much depressed for the rest of the evening.

BAYARD TAYLOR

In other years — lost youth's enchanted years,
Seen now, and evermore, through blinding tears
And empty longing for what may not be —
The Desert gave him back to us; the Sea
Yielded him up; the icy Norland strand
Lured him not long, nor that soft German air
He loved could keep him. Ever his own land
Fettered his heart and brought him back again.
What sounds are these of farewell and despair
Borne on the winds across the wintry main!
What unknown way is this that he has gone,
Our Bayard, in such silence and alone?
What dark new quest has tempted him once more
To leave us? Vainly, standing by the shore,
We strain our eyes. But patience! When the soft
Spring gales are blowing over Cedarcroft,
Whitening the hawthorn; when the violets bloom
Along the Brandywine, and overhead
The sky is blue as Italy's, he will come . . .
In the wind's whisper, in the swaying pine,
In song of bird and blossoming of vine,
And all fair things he loved ere he was dead!

CHAPTER XX

WE had been much impressed, on a previous visit to Europe, in witnessing a foretaste of the formalities prescribed when Royalty descends from its heights to visit a subject of its kingdom. It was in the small village of Inverary, the Highland headquarters of the Duke of Argyll. Queen Victoria had signified her august intention of visiting there the Duke of Argyll. The Marquis of Lorne had married Princess Louise, the fourth daughter of the Queen. The prestige of the Argyll family in their own land was well shown in the remark of a Highlander on hearing the news of that engagement: "Aye, the Queen'll be a prood leddy the day!"

The Castle stands in a wooded park noted for the beauty of its trees. On the smooth green lawn in front of the entrance gate were drawn up in militant form a large company of men clothed with great diversity of costume. Some were in Scottish kilts, some in blue cotton blouses, some with hats, and some without. Their armament was as peculiar as their dress, consisting of sticks that looked like broomsticks minus the brooms — but with their aid the crazy infantry "presented arms" and "grounded arms" with stoical exactness. We stood

for a long time watching these incomprehensible manipulations, and vainly trying to bribe the Censor to allow us to pass nearer to the Castle gates. On our return to the "Argyll Arms," our host, with exultant pride, told of the expected visit of the Queen, and that the "awkward squad" were the retainers of the Duke, in daily practice to receive Her Majesty with fitting honors.

Two years after this Scottish episode, we read on the folded yellow leaf of paper laid at our places on the long table in the dining-saloon of a Cunard steamer:

LIST OF
SALOON PASSENGERS

per R.M.S. "Scythia" May 24, for New York. [1879]
His Grace the Duke of Argyll
and man servant
Lord Walter Campbell
and man servant
Lady Elizabeth Campbell
Lady Mary Campbell
and maid servant

Great was our interest in this reading, and strong was our hope — but most doubtful were we of its realization — that the distinguished party might come to the dining-saloon, and that we might gaze, even from afar, on their table. The weather on the voyage was most propitious — calm seas and blue skies. On the second day after leaving Queenstown,

two adventurous mariners were pacing the deck when they were joined by Lord Walter Campbell, who, in introducing himself, said, "My father begs the honor of an introduction to Mrs. Aldrich"!!!

It was with fear and trembling the lady waited until the Duke came up and was presented. His first remark was not flattering, but it put her quite at her ease, in showing that it was not herself that the honor of the introduction was asked for — but her *hat*, the yellow bird that alighted thereupon having so much interested the Duke that he was desirous of its name and further knowledge of its habits.

The owners of the yellow bird expressed their true belief that outside the rue de la Paix there had never been such a bird on sea or land. When the laughter induced by the "origin of the species" had ceased, formality had blown itself skyward, and the remaining days at sea were days of delightful companionship.

The Duke of Argyll was at this time fifty-eight years old, his whole appearance indicative of energy and vivacity. His face was a striking and intellectual one. "He was a born leader of men, by virtue not only of an earldom dating back before the discovery of America, and by virtue of leadership of a clan eight centuries old, but also by great talents and natural force and breadth of intellect."

In coming on deck in the morning, we were reason-

ably sure of finding "His Grace," snugly ensconced in our wraps, and his book, in one of our steamer chairs. After the first salutation he would say, "Pray, go and have your smoke, Mr. Aldrich, and leave your chair to me." And as the "Lady Nicotine" had always been the only rival in Mr. Aldrich's time and affection, the release would be gladly accepted, and for the hour or two following there would be delightful talk of books and men, poets and authors, interspersed with glimpses of the crowded and varied London life. At first, for his listener, there were grave difficulties as to the proper place and kind of title to use in addressing the speaker. Several times in the interest and warmth of discussion, the Listener so far forgot the ceremonial rules of polite society as to say, "*Mr.* Argyll"!! With much humiliation, pardon was begged, and further instruction asked as to the form and titles that might be used. Bewildering, I think to both, was the Duke's answer. Well remembered is the leisurely way he reclined in the long chair, the gray fog shutting out the horizon, as slowly he enumerated, one by one, his many aliases, and laughingly offered the choice of one, or all: Sir George Douglas Campbell, K.T.P.C.; Marquis of Lorne; Duke, Marquis, and Earl, of Argyll; Lord Hamilton in the peerage of England; Lord Lieutenant, Hereditary Sheriff of County Argyll;

Earl of Campbell and Cowal; Viscount Lochen; Baron Sundridge of Corm; Lord of Inverary; Master of the Queen's Household and Keeper of the Red Seal of Scotland; Admiral of the Western Isles; Keeper of Dunoon Castle, etc., and "*Mr.* Argyll"!!

There lingers delightfully in memory one feature of the voyage on this "Ocean Sea" — the shrill musical cry of the bagpipes at sundown and morning, the picturesque figure of the piper in his tartan plaid and kilts. In fancy, I hear again a voice saying: "I could not explain, nor could you understand, the emotion, the passion, the sound of the pipes awakens. Love, family, life, ambition, joy, sorrow — all are epitomized in that mellifluent cry. I am taking the pipes to my son and my daughter in Canada; they will hear in its tones the spirit of Home."

Mr. Aldrich, on coming down to his cabin a few days before the arrival in New York, saw Niobe all tears, sitting on the steamer trunk, the cause of the tears being that the great Duke had announced his pleasant wish of being invited to Ponkapog for a visit!! The wish was received with consternation and a hurried retreat to solitude, to devise what impediment could be laid in the pathway. In this one instance Niobe found no champion for her cause in Mr. Aldrich. With true, democratic, American independence, he refused to see the enormous contrast of the small brown house of Ponkapog Village and

the vast masonry of Inverary Castle. Vainly was the practising infantry on the lawn marched before him — he refused to surrender or lower his colors. It was not until mention was made of the lord-in-waiting, the gentleman of the bedchamber, the man servant, that hospitality waned and a temporary truce was declared.

When the voyage was nearing the end, the Scythia slowing up for the health officer to come aboard, one of the fellow passengers approached, with hat in hand, and bowing low to the Duke, said: "Your Grace, the custom-house officers will soon be here; they will be in the dining-saloon at the head of the long table. If you will go at once and take your place, you will not have to wait so long in making your declaration." The fine courtesy with which the Duke thanked the stranger for this entirely superfluous advice, and the satisfied smile of benefit conferred, with which the stranger turned, are not forgettable. The Government had sent a special boat and the luggage was then being transferred.

The news of the arrival of the ducal party had been much heralded. New York Harbor was gay with every variety of boats and sailing craft, flags flying, whistles blowing, in deafening welcome. A few of the Duke's friends, with many city officials, under the guidance of the Collector of the Port, steamed down in the custom-house boat. Mr. P. T.

Barnum had asked the favor of being included in the number, as he greatly desired to meet his wife, who was a passenger on the incoming steamer. The enterprising showman was the first on board and asked to have the Duke pointed out to him. The Duke was standing by the rail, talking with the owners of "the yellow bird," his back to the approaching visitor. Suddenly he was conscious of a vigorous slap on the ducal shoulder, and a stentorian voice rang in his ear: "Well, how are you, Duke? Welcome, welcome, Duke, to our glorious country!" Then ensued a transformation scene more sudden and surprising than that of any moving picture that has ever been or will be. Mr. Cabot Lodge, in his most interesting book, "Early Memories," writing of the Duke of Argyll, says, "He had very light red hair, which seemed to be flaring up from his head, and I remember Mr. Story saying that he looked like a lucifer match just ignited." The blow on the shoulder was the lighting of the lucifer match. Its fire burnt and shrivelled to ashes the daring offender. It was a wordless battle. When it was over, the thread of the sentence, that had been dropped for the moment, was picked up again. Nothing was said of the encounter, but one could feel the white heat of the fray.

In the informal days on shipboard the acquaintance had ripened into a warm friendship; the invi-

tation was given that the next time the sea was crossed, there should be a visit to the Castle, and this time there would be no need to bribe the Censor to open wide its gates. The sound of the chain as the anchor was lowered and the pulsation of the engine ceased brought to the three who listened a real regret that the pleasant hours of companionship had come to an end.

The "extras" and evening papers of that day announced: "The Scythia arrived at the dock between three and four o'clock. Taking a carriage soon after five o'clock, the Duke and his son drove down Fifth Avenue and Broadway to Brentano's, in Union Square. The Duke called for the American edition of his book, 'The Reign of Law,' and praised its appearance."

The next morning's mail brought to Ponkapog the following letter:

"*New York, June* 3, 1879

"DEAR MRS. ALDRICH:

"I have just had time to go to a bookseller whose shop was known to my son, and I at once found a copy of my book 'The Reign of Law,' with a photo of myself which I had not before seen. It is an American edition, and the back is, I am sorry to say, a little shabby. But you must excuse this and kindly accept it in remembrance of the pleasant conversa-

tions I had with you on the passage out. I am much struck with the handsomeness of New York. But I must proceed as fast as I can to Niagara.

"I hope you found the twins quite well.

"Yours,

"ARGYLL."

Mr. Greenslet, in his "Life of Thomas Bailey Aldrich," wrote: "With the beginning of 1881 came another event that marked an epoch in the smooth-flowing stream of Aldrich's life. Mr. Howells, who as assistant editor and editor, had wielded the trident of the ruler of the 'Atlantic' for fifteen years, wearied a little of the toil, and resigned his post. Immediately thereupon the natural thing happened, and our poet, who had long before won his editorial spurs, and who had been for a score of years one of the 'Atlantic's' most important contributors, was appointed to fill that distinguished 'seat of the scorner.'" Miss Francis, Aldrich's assistant for the nine years of his editorship, draws a pen portrait very true to life: "To work with him was usually a most agreeable experience, but as to accomplishment, it had its disadvantages. It was likely to remind him of something much more interesting — some bit of autobiography, oftenest an anecdote of his early life, which led to another and yet another. Ah, if it could be possible to put that desultory talk,

vivid narration, scintillating humor, into cold type, it would leave any tale he ever told with pen and ink far behind."

In the same year and month that Mr. Aldrich succeeded Mr. Howells in the editorial chair of the "Atlantic," Boston had a new sensation in the arrival of Mr. Oscar Wilde. In a note to Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Stedman said: "This Philistine town [New York] is making a fool of itself over Oscar Wilde, who is lecturing on Art Subjects, appearing in public in an extraordinary dress — a loose shirt with a turn-down collar, a flowing tie of uncommon shade, velvet coat, knee-breeches — and often he is seen in public carrying a lily, or a sunflower, in his hand. He has brought hundreds of letters of introduction."

On Mr. Wilde's first night in Boston, "A number of Harvard students dressed up in a burlesque of the æsthetic costume. The masqueraders waited until Oscar Wilde had stepped upon the platform, and then trooped in, in single file, each assuming a demeanor more absurd than that of the man who preceded him. There were sixty youths in the procession, and all were dressed in swallow-tail coats, knee-breeches, flowing wigs and green ties. They all wore large lilies in their buttonholes, and each man carried a huge sunflower as he limped along. Sixty front seats had been reserved for the Harvard con-

tingent, and it was amidst shouts of laughter that they filed into their places."

During the stay of Mr. Wilde in Boston, Mr. Aldrich lived in strict seclusion. No invitations to dinners, receptions, or lunches were accepted, on the chance that this prodigious *poseur* might also be a guest. It was not until the end of a year that we came upon Mr. Wilde, suddenly, and met face to face. We had been in Europe all summer, and something of the æsthetic movement that was then agitating England might be observed in the costume of one of the returning pilgrims, whose dress consisted of a soft brown camel's-hair gown, long circular cloak of the same peculiar shade, with smocked yoke, large beaver hat, Gainsborough in shape, with floating, drooping plumes. Among the innumerable souvenirs of travel that had been bought for the jocund sprites, were two bisque, slender, green-tinted vases. Each vase held a red and a pink China rose, which stood out from the receptacle in bold relief. The jocund sprites had taken these treasures from the box that enclosed them, and, in the hurry of getting to the train, each carried his vase in his hand. And as the sprites, in dress and features, could have stood for Millais's picture of "The Young Princes in the Tower," the waiting group on the platform attracted more attention than was desirable.

There were no empty seats on the incoming car excepting the lengthwise one at the door and one seat on the same side, facing it, on the half of which seat sat a man clothed in singular fashion. He was wearing a light-brown velvet coat, a waistcoat of yellowish silk, blue tie and stockings, low brown shoes, and lemon-colored gloves. The hat was large and of a different shade of brown, and from under it the straight hair reached almost to the shoulder. The wearer of this strange costume slowly moved a green morocco bag, which evidently had served as a retainer for the seat, and with a bow yielded to the one who waited her moiety or share.

The sprites with their China roses in their hands, the pilgrim with her drooping plumes, and the stranger with the unusual dress, made a quartette so remarkable that it was not to be wondered that they became the attraction for all eyes, not only in that car, but of passengers in the other cars continually walking through.

The train was an accommodation one and stopped at many way stations. At each there seemed to be a crowd on the platform who, the moment the train slowed up, would spring onto the steps and gaze into the car. Mr. Aldrich was riding in the smoking-car and oblivious of this scenic effect. It was not until the train had made many miles that a sufferer arose, and, following the conductor, asked if he

knew why the people behaved in this unpleasantly rude way.

Surprisingly unexpected was his answer: "Oh, I suspect it is just curiosity to look at *Oscar Wilde*"!!! What a gloomy, tingling sensation these words produced, for all the curious gazers must have thought that Mr. Wilde was travelling *en famille*. If wishes could have dashed and shattered to atoms China red and pink roses, the jocund sprites would have arrived at their journey's end with empty hands — no bangs, and — long trousers! The question is still unanswered, as to what Oscar Wilde's feelings may have been toward this Bunthorne group.

Some years after this chance encounter, Mr. Aldrich met Mr. Wilde and his wife, on the stage of the Lyceum Theatre. Mr. Irving was giving a supper for apparently all the critics and distinguished men and women of his city. The notes of invitation had requested that the guests should remain in the stalls after the lowering of the final curtain. As the audience that were not invited to the feast filed out the atmosphere seemed filled with the electricity that was always an accompaniment of a "first night" at the Lyceum Theatre. In an incredibly short time the curtain was raised, disclosing what seemed to be a marble hall in a ducal palace. A long table ran the entire width of the stage, with wings at the sides extending almost to the footlights. Mr.

Irving, in evening dress, and Miss Terry, in voluminous robes of white, advanced to the red carpeted steps that temporarily made the uprising from the parquet to the stars an easy ascension. Mr. Bram Stoker introduced Mr. Wilde, who kindly acted as Herald as the different personages came in sight, fitting names and characters in concise and lucid ways.

Mr. Wilde had dropped his masquerade, discarded his unwise and foolish attitude, and never assumed it again. He wore the conventional dress based on accepted rules, and in no outward ways differed from his fellow-men. Mrs. Wilde was pretty, and young. She wore a canary-colored gown, so modish that probably it was "created" on the other side of the Channel. At this time Mr. and Mrs. Wilde must have been almost bride and groom. They gave the impression of congenial companionship and happiness.

Vividly to my memory comes another evening at the Lyceum. Mr. Irving had invited Mr. Aldrich to the play, and to supper afterwards at the Beefsteak Room, to meet Madame Bernhardt, who, when in London, was a frequent guest at these meetings on the historic ground of what had once been the old "Beefsteak Club Room."

Mr. Irving's box at the theatre was on the stalls' level. It had a special door which was approached

from the stage. In the intervening years that have passed since that happy night, the name of the play has slipped beyond recall, but the unrivalled interest remains of the slight opening of the door, and Mr. Irving's tall figure, arrayed in all his stage grandeur, beckoning his guests to come out for a minute that he might speak to them. The rich costume, this unfamiliar accoutrement of the stage, produced, in one of his surprised guests, a strange shyness. The instantaneous thought that flitted through her mind being, was it possible that she had once dared to tell this sumptuous splendor "to eat his mushrooms before they became quite cold"?

At the fall of the final curtain, Mr. Stoker came to the box to conduct Mr. Aldrich on his winding way. We descended a red-carpeted staircase, crossed the stage, ascended a twisting stair, passed through an armory filled with such a variety of weapons that it might have been the Tower of London in miniature, and were ushered into a large wainscoted apartment. A few logs were burning in an antique fireplace, and drawn near to the blaze was a high-backed settee, on which Madame Bernhardt was half sitting, half reclining. She wore a white satin, décolleté dress, which hung loose from the shoulder, where it was held in place by heavily encrusted jewelled clasps. The waist was loosely defined by a flexible girdle, made of large squares of gold, that

formed the massive setting of the precious stones that adorned it. The long ends of the girdle reached almost to her feet.

Memories bring back to these later years the living picture of Sarah Bernhardt, as we first saw her in the Beefsteak Room of the Lyceum. The indefinable personality, the wondrous charm, the golden voice in which she greeted Mr. Aldrich — so perfect her acting and so kind her heart that it might be true or it might be false, "that his was a loved and familiar name." There were many brilliant guests at supper that night. Extraordinarily vivid was Madame Bernhardt's description of a pantomime she had seen in London, and of the acting of Columbine and the peculiar manner her hair was worn, in small curls about her head. "It was like this," she said. With rapid fingers she separated the strands of her rather short hair and twisted it tight in innumerable spikes that stood out in bold relief all over her head, which after this realistic illustration she seemed to forget, as her coiffure remained dressed in this individual fashion for the rest of the evening.

It was delightful to see Madame Bernhardt and Miss Terry together, each so unlike, both equally fascinating. Madame Bernhardt had gone early in the evening to Miss Terry's dressing-room. Not finding her there, she had written on the white napkin of her toilet table, "Ellen Terry, my dearling,"

that being as near as her French tongue could surmount the spelling of "darling." Miss Terry said she had cut the dear message out and should have it framed. "Fussy," Mr. Irving's little dog, was much in evidence that night at the supper, dividing his attentions with impartiality between the two queens of the feast, traversing over the table the distance that separated him from the strawberry ice-cream of Madame Bernhardt's plate and the "tutti-frutti" of Miss Terry's. The friendship between Fussy and his master was very intense, the companionship inseparable. And although Fussy was content to receive the adulation of the entire theatrical company, his true allegiance was solely to Mr. Irving himself.

On the first visit of Mr. Irving and his company to America, in the change from the train to the steamer at Southampton, Fussy disappeared, to the inconsolable agitation of his master, who was with great difficulty persuaded to go on board the steamer. Telegrams were sent in all directions, offering large rewards, but they brought no answers.

Three weeks passed without sign that Fussy still lived. On a night at the end of the third week, the keeper of the stage entrance of the Lyceum heard a faint whine at the closed door, which at first he disregarded; but as the low, plaintive cry continued, it aroused his interest, and opening the door, a poor bedraggled mite of a creature dragged itself in, a

wisp of a tail wagged, and the almost skeleton of what once had been a dog fell to the floor. The expression of the eyes and the weak movement of the tail forced the recognition. It was Fussy. How had the poor little wasted being, thirsty and starved, the pampered darling of happy days, found its way on untravelled paths that lay between the stage door of London streets and the crowded pier of Southampton?

It was of the same little dog that Mr. Irving, when he was told that the Star Theatre and all his effects were in danger of burning, asked first, "Is Fussy safe?"

CHAPTER XXI

"TURN backward, O Time, in thy flight," and from the world of shadows bring again the group of men who played their part on the stage of Life that wintry day in 1887, when in the Boston Museum was held an "Authors' Reading," so called, the object of which was to raise money for a Longfellow Memorial Fund. From the first inception of the idea it was hailed with zeal by the friends of Mr. Longfellow, the authors and poets, who for friendship's sake were glad to add their quota towards perpetuating his memory. Mr. Clemens had suggested that the price of the tickets should be five dollars. On the day of the "Reading" every seat in the Boston Museum was occupied, and in every available place the people stood wedged one against another, while the crowd still seeking admission reached far out into the street.

Before the rising of the curtain, when Mr. Aldrich, in much perturbation and genuine stage fright, arrived on the scene and saw the semicircle of chairs all of one pattern and one height, the *mise en scène* a reproduction of the stage as set for the performance of Christy Minstrels with their darky jokes, songs and dances, he said to the assembled poets

Programme.

PROFESSOR CHARLES ELIOT NORTON WILL PRESIDE.

1. MR. SAMUEL L. CLEMENS.
2. MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.
3. DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.
4. MR. GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.
5. MR. T. B. ALDRICH.
6. HON. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.
7. REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE.
8. MR. W. D. HOWELLS.
9. COLONEL T. W. HIGGINSON.

THE READINGS WILL BEGIN PRECISELY AT TWO O'CLOCK.

and authors, he felt sure that in that environment the moment the curtain went up, involuntarily he should lean forward from his chair and address Hon. James Russell Lowell and Rev. Edward Hale in this wise: "Now, Breder Hale, when you prays, don't pray so much in general way; pray more perticler; if I prays de Lord to git me a turkey, dat ain't nothin' — I ain't agoin' to git dat turkey; but when I prays de Lord to git me one of Massa John's

turkeys I knows I'se gwine to git dat turkey 'fore Sat'dy night!"

Mr. Aldrich was so obsessed with this idea, his nerves so strained and out of tune (having an unconquerable terror of speaking before an audience), that it was felt he might almost do it and that it would be wise to send a hurried call to the property man. The uniform chairs were hustled away, sofas and seats of different form brought in, and the precise semicircle made carelessly irregular and casual.

In an old and yellowing letter bearing the date of that afternoon, the writer of it says: "We were in time to see the footlights turned on and the curtain go up. Sitting in an irregular semicircle on the stage, some on chairs others on sofas, were the ten noted men including [Mrs.] Julia Ward Howe and the chairman. A small reading-stand, a large bunch of flowers, and a pitcher of water with the accompanying goblet, was the only ornament (excepting Aldrich) on the stage."

On that memorable afternoon Mr. Clemens was the first speaker. Professor Charles Eliot Norton said, "I am but as the Herald who proclaims the names of the heroes as they enter the lists"; then introduced Mr. Clemens with that felicity of word and phrase of which he was a master. As Mr. Clemens rose and came forward, loud and long was the

applause as he announced his subject, "English as She is Taught."

Mr. Clemens was followed by Dr. Holmes. When he came forward the applause was most enthusiastic, unmistakably showing the affection with which he was regarded. Dr. Holmes read "The Chambered Nautilus," "Dorothy Q." — an English paper he said had spelled it "Cue," which would have been more appropriate if she had been a billiard player, or even an actress.

Mrs. Julia Ward Howe was the next speaker; she read "Her Orders" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." She wore a black velvet dress and a white cap, and as the martial music of her words fell on the listeners' ears she seemed like one inspired. Rev. Edward Everett Hale came next. My yellowing letter says: "His selection was good and apparently had been well practised. He is an odd-looking man and wears misfit clothes. His coat seemed to have more buttons than buttonholes, with some of the buttons doing double duty; his eyes are sunken and his hair grows in bunches, two of the bunches being over his eyes. Dr. Hale read 'The Great Harvest Year.' Mr. George William Curtis read extracts from the 'Potiphar Papers.'"

Mr. Norton said, in introducing Mr. Aldrich: "'There are two points,' says Mr. Browning, 'two points in the adventure of the diver: one when, as a

beggar he prepares to plunge, one when, a prince, he rises with a pearl.' I imagine myself that diver, but I am certain of my pearl."

I quote again from my yellowing letter: "Then came Thomas Bailey Aldrich. While the show was in progress, Aldrich and Howells sat close together at the back and chatted occasionally. Aldrich sat stiff and prim as though he had called for the first time to pay attention to Mrs. Howe, who sat at his right, and was naturally bashful and nervous, while Howells sat on his back, his feet a yard and a quarter apart out in front of him, his hands in gray trousers pockets, and his head on the back of his chair. Aldrich does n't look more than thirty and Howells would pass easily for forty. Aldrich, when standing before the footlights, did n't seem to know what to do with his feet, and throughout his reading, which was very poor from an elocutionary standpoint, he was nervous in the extreme. I imagine that Longfellow only, and no amount of money, could drag him out to read in public. At any rate, he did not seem to relish the task, not even a little bit."

Candor and truth unhappily compel me to allow that this description of Mr. Aldrich is realistically true, as he appeared when he was confronted by an audience. Of all the men who gave their voices on that day for this dear son of memory, I can well believe that if a gift to be real must be a sacrifice,

Mr. Aldrich was the most generous giver. It was only the one who was nearest to him who could understand the heroism and warmth of friendship that brought and held him on that stage, or how erroneous would be the impression those, seeing him for the first time there, must form of a personality so unlike himself.

In the everyday circumstances of life, Mr. William H. Rideing's pen portrait brings Mr. Aldrich to my love and memory in a way which no other written words have ever done; and it was thus he ever seemed to me:

"It always seemed to me that Aldrich belonged to other times than our own, and that he had strayed like a traveller returned out of an earlier century. There was something of Herrick in him, something of Sir Philip Sidney, and something of Lovelace. At the latest he would have been at home in the age of Queen Anne, a sword and a cocked hat; ruffles of lace and a coat of lavender velvet, strapped with gold; a doublet of creamy satin, also frilled and embroidered; knee-breeches and silk hose would have become him better than the quiet clothes he always wore. Without swagger, he had the swing and gaiety of a Cavalier; a blithe heart and a habit of seeing things through the airy fancy and high resolves of a still earlier gallantry, even the gallantry of a knight-errant riding through the forest of the

world with songs on his lips and a wit as nimble as his sword. His weapon was raillery: it flashed in the air and pricked without venom and without leaving any rankling wound. He literally laughed away those who crossed swords with him, and left them laughing too. His conversation was even better than his writings and like them was crisp, pointed, and inimitably and impressively whimsical. It seemed to be impossible for him to say a commonplace thing or to say anything that did not end in some unexpected turn to evoke the smiles or laughter of the listener.

"Confident and even aggressive among intimates, he was incurably shy among strangers, especially in public gatherings of all kinds, and had a strong aversion to speech-making. I remember a great garden party given by Governor Claflin to celebrate one of the many birthdays of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mr. Aldrich was expected to be one of the chief celebrants of the occasion, but he shunned the crowd and moved about the edge of it, until at last we found ourselves out of sight and hearing of it. The master of the ceremonies pursued him and discovered him like a truant school-boy. 'Here, Aldrich, you must keep your end up! Come on!' Aldrich was inarticulate, and as soon as his pursuer disappeared, flew with me for the station. Soon afterward, and long before the ceremonies had ended, we were at

his cottage on Lynn Terrace, not hearing speeches or making them, but listening to the breakers tumbling against the rocks of that pleasant seaside retreat. I suspect that he realized his disgrace. It was not the consequence of any reluctance to do homage to Mrs. Stowe, but rather his unconquerable dislike of publicity."

Colonel T. W. Higginson was the next speaker after Mr. Aldrich; he read delightfully his "Vacation for Saints"; Mr. Howells read extracts from "Their Wedding Journey"; Mr. Lowell, Longfellow's "Building of the Ship"; and in this wise ended one of the most notable entertainments ever given in Boston.

CHAPTER XXII

"Now one by one the visions fly,
And one by one the voices die."

IT was in the summer of 1885, on a cruise on the Oneida, Mr. E. C. Benedict's yacht, that the conception by Mr. Booth of a Club for Actors took shape and crystallized. Lying fallow in his mind for some years had been the desire to do something tangible and enduring for his profession, but it was not until in the intimate companionship of the yacht's party — Lawrence Barrett, Parke Godwin, Laurence Hutton, William Bispham, and Mr. Aldrich — that the idea of an Actors' Club was seriously discussed.

"Mr. Aldrich with happy inspiration suggested the name, 'The Players.' Curiously enough, the whole thing was based upon the name. If Mr. Aldrich had not thought of a name before it was thought of itself, 'The Players,' perhaps, would never have existed."

A year or two before the memorable cruise Mr. Booth had bought the fine old house, 29 Chestnut Street, Boston. This happy conjunction of near neighborhood united still closer the old comradeship of Booth and Aldrich, and it was an unusual day in

which the two friends did not meet. Many were the talks and plans and schemes, in front of the cosy fire in Mr. Booth's den, as to the ways and means of the Actors' Club that was to be, so that it was not surprising that when Mr. Booth's daughter married, Mr. Booth grew restless and impatient with desire that his plan should materialize. Shortly after the daughter's marriage, in a letter to Mr. Furness, Mr. Booth says: "At last my Boston house is empty, scrubbed, locked, the keys in the office of an agent who will sell the property for me, and I am here [Lynn] for a few days with Aldrich.

"I coaxed him to take some buttermilk to-day, and he wryly remarked, 'It's like kissing a baby!' Is n't that as good as Thackeray's remark about the American oyster?"

On the last night of the year 1888 a scene of uncommon beauty and significance was visible in a house in Gramercy Park. On that night, and just before the death of the old year, the members of The Players Club assembled for the first time and were formally installed in their home. It was nearly twelve o'clock when Mr. Booth, taking his place upon a dais in front of the hearthstone, formally addressed his associates, and in a brief speech, with gentle dignity and winning sweetness of manner, presented to them the title-deeds to their clubhouse, the building No. 16 Gramercy Park, which,

THE DRAWING-ROOM AT 59 MT. VERNON STREET

with its unique furniture, works of art and fine decorations, was his personal gift to the Club. No speech was ever in better taste, nor was there ever a good deed done with more grace, humility, and sweetness. In giving the Club to the Actors, Mr. Booth had made a home for the homeless and ever-travelling profession. This great benevolence crowned a life that was as full of benevolence as it was of grief and triumph.

A few weeks before the opening of the Club, Mr. Booth had written to Mr. Oliver I. Lay: "I have heard that some of my friends among the Players desire to compliment me by placing a portrait of myself on the wall of the Club reading-room. On some other occasion I could not decline such a manifestation of good feeling, but under present circumstances, while the house is still my own, to be presented by me to others, I shrink from the indelicacy I should be guilty of were I to permit any conspicuous portrait of myself to be exhibited. My friends may consider me morbidly sensitive on the subject: I may be so; but 't is my nature, and no effort of mine can overcome my aversion to any suggestion of self-glorification which a prominent portrait of myself on such an occasion would evince. . . ."

Two years later the members of the Club commissioned Mr. Sargent to paint for the Club a por-

trait of their president. In a letter to his daughter Mr. Booth wrote: "Just as I packed my bag and was about starting for the station, Mr. Sargent called to say that he had word from the Art Committee to paint my portrait for the Club. Of course, this is the only opportunity to have so distinguished an artist at me, consequently I yield to the annoyance of posing."

In writing to a friend later, Mr. Booth said: "When I told Aldrich, he advised me to buy at once a piece of sand-paper, and inside locked doors to sand-paper my soul, for I might be assured that in this presentment of myself, all secret sins, or thoughts, would be dragged squirming to the light, and were liable to take precedence over the virtues when this master-hand wielded the brush. This prediction would have been verified if, after the second sitting, I had not said to Aldrich, 'I am disappointed in the picture, for if it is a true portrayal of myself, why, then I don't feel as I look.' Aldrich's advice was urgent, that as the picture was for succeeding generations of the Club, it was only justice to the artist that he should be told. Upon this cue I spoke. Mr. Sargent, apparently unconscious of my words, painted on for a few minutes and then said, 'Look now, and see if you like it any better.' The face on the canvas was entirely painted out, and with ready alacrity a new picture was begun."

Mr. Booth writes, in a letter to Mr. Bispham: "I think Sargent will make a great success with my portrait. It is unlike any I have seen of myself in regard to expression."

SARGENT'S PORTRAIT OF EDWIN BOOTH AT THE PLAYERS

That face which no man ever saw
And from his memory banished quite,
With eyes in which are Hamlet's awe
And Cardinal Richelieu's subtle light,
Looks from this frame. A master's hand
Has set the master-player here,
In the fair temple that he planned
Not for himself. To us most dear
This image of him! "It was thus
He looked; such pallor touched his cheek;
With that same grace he greeted us —
Nay, 't is the man, could it but speak!"
Sad words that shall be said some day —
Far fall the day! O cruel Time,
Whose breath sweeps mortal things away,
Spare long this image of his prime,
That others, standing in the place
Where, save as ghosts, we come no more,
May know what sweet majestic face
The gentle Prince of Players wore!

Mr. Booth's professional life closed as it had begun, by chance. His last appearance was in Brooklyn, in "Hamlet." As the curtain fell, the applause continued for a long time. The audience rose, and Booth was recalled again and again. On that night

his theatrical life ended without any formal farewell to the stage. For some time the periods of his engagements had grown shorter and shorter; little by little he had relaxed his grasp upon the stage.

The last few years of Mr. Booth's life were passed mostly at The Players Club, in the rooms on the third floor reserved for him — and there he died, in the sixtieth year of his age.

Two years before his death he had a slight stroke of paralysis; from that time his health gradually failed; he knew the end of his earthly life was near, but he did not brood over it, and he did not fear it. He had often said with Hamlet, "The readiness is all," and he was prepared to answer the summons whenever it might come. Nothing in his life was more beautiful than the spirit of resignation in which he accepted declining health, with its gathering shadows.

In April, 1893, Mr. Booth had a second stroke, and from that hour he lingered until the night of June 7, when, soon after midnight, the brave and patient spirit made the dark voyage into the great unknown. On the night Edwin Booth was born there was a great shower of meteors. At the hour when he lay dying, all the electric lights in The Players Club grew dim and went out.

"Good-night, sweet Prince;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

JUNE 7, 1893

In narrow space, with Booth, lie housed in death
Iago, Hamlet, Shylock, Lear, Macbeth.
If still they seem to walk the painted scene
'T is but the ghosts of those that once have been.

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. GREENSLET writes that in the spring of 1890, after nine years in the editorial chair, Aldrich concluded that the time had come to enjoy a larger leisure. Resigning the post to Horace Scudder, who had often occupied it during his summers in Europe, he sailed for the East, free of all ties; and manuscripts and "make-up" troubled him no more.

The memorabilia of these years are few. The Aldriches were abroad in the summers of 1890, 1891, and 1892. In the summer of 1893 they built "The Crags" at Tenants Harbor on the Maine coast, a summer place that the poet came to be immensely fond of. In the winter of 1894–95 they went around the world. In the winter of 1898–99 they went again around the world; and they were in Europe in the summer of 1900. Despite this far-darting travel and the zest with which he enjoyed his leisure, Aldrich's pen was far from idle. He wrote numerous short stories, and though he was continually affirming that he had written his last poem, the impulse was as continually revisiting him. These years saw the composition of such poems as "Elmwood," "Unguarded Gates," "Santo Domingo," and the "Shaw Memorial Ode." They saw, too, the successful stage

production of his drama "Mercedes" — his black little tragedy, as he always called it. Mr. Palmer, a New York manager, and an old friend, had often asked Mr. Aldrich to let him produce "Mercedes," but Mr. Aldrich, having the feelings of the poet about the play, invariably replied, "I wrote it, I love it, and I don't care to have it played." One day in Mr. Palmer's office he saw a photograph of a young actress, Julia Arthur, with a scarf thrown over her head. In the pictured face to his eye was visualized the Mercedes of his imagination. Mr. Aldrich asked who it was, and with Mr. Palmer's answer, "A young girl in our company," Mr. Aldrich said, "She could play Mercedes." Mr. Palmer with surprise asked, "Merely on the strength of that photograph would you be willing to have her?" Mr. Aldrich replied, "If you will cast her for the part you can produce the play."

To Miss Arthur part and play opened new possibilities, and she could scarcely believe that she had been chosen to act the fiery Spanish peasant girl. She flung herself into the work, and when she had finally imagined and accomplished her disguise, even Mr. Palmer, in the darkened theatre where the rehearsal was about to begin, failed to recognize, in the brown, ear-ringed, lustrous-haired, and fiery-eyed Spanish girl, the Miss Arthur he had known in other parts.

The following note from Miss Arthur brings back from distant years, with startling clearness, the evening of the first dress rehearsal of the little tragedy:

"The rehearsal was called at eight, but by six o'clock I was at my make-up table hard at work. When I was ready I went out to find Mr. Palmer, for I wanted him to see my make-up. The theatre was dark, but at last I found him, leaning his elbows on the rail behind the orchestra. I went up to him and said, 'Is this all right?' I was in the simplest of peasant costumes with a big comb in my hair, and stood with my hands on my hips. He looked at me for a moment and then said, 'I gave orders to have the theatre closed. There is a rehearsal going on.' I stared at him, for I did n't know what he meant. My knees knocked together with nervousness, but I said again, 'Why, I just wanted to know if you think this will do.' He looked at me quickly, and then exclaimed, 'Good Lord, child! Is it you?' He thought I was one of the Italian women who came in to clean. When he had looked me well over, he took me to a box where Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich were sitting, and I was introduced just as I was, costume, make-up, and all. I was in a panic, for I had heard of Mr. Aldrich always as a great poet, and I was only a young girl working hard over the part and loving the rôle. All the company had talked to me

JULIA ARTHUR

about the poet, and quoted his verses until I was so nervous at meeting him that I did n't know what to do. Mr. Aldrich took one look at me and then turned to his wife and said, 'My Mercedes!'"

The week preceding the first performance of the play had been unusually exacting with social and business engagements. All the time Mr. Aldrich felt he could give the New York visit would be to arrive late in the afternoon of *the day*, and leave on an early train the next morning. Mr. Palmer had reserved a box at the theatre for Mr. Aldrich, and a large contingent of his friends had signified their intention to be present at the first performance. The more intimate clientèle had written they would call at the hotel soon after his arrival. The train was late. The sharer of the nervous hopes and fears hurriedly unpacked the small box containing the evening clothes, depositing Mr. Aldrich's share in his dressing-room, placing them with systematic care, that he might lose no time in enrobing, later in the day. As the last thing was taken from the box, the first visitor was announced. And when the last caller left, the time for dinner and to dress had been sadly encroached upon. That, added to the discovery that certain much-needed articles of feminine attire had been omitted by a careless maid in packing, threw something of gloom over the intermittent conversation that filtered through the half-

open door of the dressing-room. At the most important moment in the arrangement of a coiffure, words were overheard that in spite of the hot curling iron in the hand, sent a chill to the hearer: — "Where are my trousers!!!"

With enforced calm the answer was given, "They are with the rest of the evening suit."

There was silence for a moment, and then the voice said: "I have the pair on that was on the bed — but they drag on the floor a half of a yard, and for the want of several inches of cloth they won't meet at the waist. I think they must belong to the twins!!!"

The hot iron grew cold in the holder's hand as she stood petrified, deprived even of thought. What could be done at that hour? A moment later the door of the dressing-room opened, and Mr. Aldrich came in dressed in the "pepper-and-salt" lounging suit he had worn on the train. Apparently all disappointment had slipped away and left only the desire that, for the one who cared most, the misfortune should be smoothed away and the enjoyment of the evening not spoiled by the unlucky accident. Mr. Aldrich was firm that he could not go to the theatre without evening dress; that it was disrespectful to his friends and his audience. At last the happy compromise was made, that he would go to the theatre with his pepper-and-salt trousers, the

rest of his body arrayed in evening splendor; that he should sit in the back of the box, the wraps on a chair making a screen to hide the defection of the conventional evening make-up.

When at the end of the play the curtain was rung down, it was raised again and again in answer to the applause that greeted the little company of actors who had crystallized its success. Then came loud calls for "Author!" "Author!" "Curtain!" "Curtain!" followed by a sharp knock at the box door and the hurried message, "Mr. Palmer says Mr. Aldrich must come in front of the curtain." The calls of "Author!" "Author!" "Curtain!" "Curtain!" grew louder and louder, and the messenger returned to the box with the imperative word, "Mr. Palmer says for Mr. Aldrich to come at once."

In this unfortunate and awkward dilemma, Mr. Aldrich stood with the chair as a screen between him and his cruel audience, bowing to the right and the left; but this did not satisfy his uncomprehending friends, who called louder and louder, "Author!" "Author!" "Curtain!" "Curtain!" "Speech!" "Speech!"

The next morning's newspapers, in criticism and editorials, said: "It was much to be regretted that Mr. Aldrich had not spontaneously yielded to the flattering request to come before the curtain, instead of coldly bowing, at the back of a stage box."

But added, in extenuation of the misdemeanor, "Perhaps it is the cool conservatism of Boston that restrained him."

From the blur of the closing years of the century a few incidents rise up from vague and indefinite memories, and stand out vivid and unconfused from the rest. Very clear is an evening at the country home of Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid. The "week-end" company numbered some twenty or thirty guests, among whom Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Chauncey M. Depew were conspicuous members. Mr. Depew had been known for years as a wit and a brilliant after-dinner speaker — and he brooked no rival near his throne. Unconsciously Mr. Aldrich had somewhat usurped his wonted place, and at dinner that night the charm of his conversation and his happy humor had centred the interest of the table talk upon himself.

It was after the dinner was over and the company adjourned to the large hall for coffee and cigars that the "Lost Leader" boldly took the field, unmindful of the disasters that might follow. Mr. Greenslet says all his life long Mr. Aldrich had been uttering good things as copious and as unconcerned as the bubbles that rise in an effervescent spring. Now he was a little nearer the footlights, and his sayings began to be more widely repeated, and men began to tell of his whimsicalities at the clubs of New York

and the dinner-tables at Washington. But unfortunately for Mr. Depew, he underestimated the weapon of his unconscious rival who had taken precedence.

As soon as the coffee was served and the guests seated in a semicircle about the blazing logs in the large hall, Mr. Depew rose, and facing Mr. Aldrich, said, "You are from Boston, I believe, Mr. Aldrich; and is this your favorite bit of verse?

> "'I'm from good old Boston,
> The home of the bean and the cod,
> Where the Cabots speak only to Lowells,
> And the Lowells speak only to God.'"

And then followed an after-dinner speech in Mr. Depew's most brilliant vein, but full of little thorns and pin-pricks directed to the blond young man who had taken from the elder his hitherto unquestioned right of being first. When the end came, amid shouts of laughter, the apparent victor with triumphant smile relighted his cigar.

Mr. Aldrich slowly walked to the high fireplace, flicked the ashes from his cigarette, and turning towards Mr. Depew began speaking, constantly interrupted by laughter that would cease for the moment, to break out again with renewed vigor. His weapon was raillery. It flashed in the air and pricked without venom. Dr. Holmes once said of Mr. Aldrich, "You have only to touch him — he

goes off like a Roman candle." Mr. Depew had touched him, and to Mr. Depew's cost he went off.

At the finish Mr. Aldrich bowed to Mr. Depew and sauntered back to his chair. For a moment there was silence, which was broken in upon by Mr. Reid's voice, saying, "Sneeze, Chauncey, your head is off." The next morning Mr. Depew returned to New York.

After Mr. Aldrich relinquished the editorship of the "Atlantic Monthly," in writing to a friend he said, "I am so happy these days that I half suspect some calamity lurking round the corner." The calamity was not long to be deferred. It came in the death of the Honorable Henry L. Pierce, his closest friend for more than a quarter of a century. In a letter to Mr. Gilder, Mr. Aldrich writes: "I suppose that Woodberry has told you what a sad and anxious household we have here. Mr. Pierce came in from Milton a week ago last Thursday to pass three or four days with us, intending to go to New York on Tuesday. On Monday morning he had a stroke of paralysis, and has ever since been lying helpless in our house. His situation is very serious. For nearly twenty-five years he has been one of the most loved of guests at our fireside, and it takes all our fortitude to face the fact that that wise and gentle and noble heart has come to us for the last time. . . ."

The deep and unaffected friendship that existed

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

between Mr. Aldrich and Mr. Pierce was most unusual. "Each by turns was guide to each." They shared the mutual interests of two very distinct lives, and the varied interests of one were vital to the other. For the quarter of a century in which they were together, it was exceptional (if they were in the same city) if a day passed in which they did not meet; and after Mr. Pierce's death the miserable feeling of loneliness changed for a long time Mr. Aldrich's world.

Mr. Pierce was a Member of Congress, twice Mayor of Boston, and although in later years declining public office, he still retained great influence in political matters. He was a citizen whom the people of his city delighted to honor. At his death the City Hall was closed during the hours of his funeral and the flag placed at half-mast. The Reverend L. F. Munger gave at the service this brief and true summary of this most lovely nature: "I found in him what only a few have thoroughly known, an utmost delicacy of mind so deep within him. It showed itself in a feeling for nature, a sense of mystery under the sky at night, a reverence before things great, a tenderness and chivalry that was almost ideal. But these were not the obvious marks of his character — more marked was a general strength and positiveness that ran throughout his entire nature. He was in all ways a strong man.

Strong in will even to obstinacy, strong in his sense of honor, strong in his love for his friends, strong in his sympathies, strong in his patriotism, strong in his likes and his dislikes. To those who knew him best there was a certain charming simplicity in his character due to the fact that it was the clear and direct product of his nature, unhelped by outside influences."

The leading newspaper of the city in writing of his death said: "He was a citizen whom the people delighted to honor. His public and private life was stainless, and not in a long time has there been known such generous remembrances of public institutions and charities as in the provisions of his will." Mr. Pierce left to Harvard the largest bequest that up to that time the College had ever received. The Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Technology, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Homœopathic Hospital, were also left like bequests.

"... Little did he crave
Men's praises; modestly, with kindly mirth
Not sad nor bitter, he accepted fate —
Drank deep of life, knew books, and hearts of men,
Cities and camps and war's immortal woe,
Yet bore through all (such virtue in him sate
His spirit is not whiter now than then)
A simple, loyal nature pure as snow."

CHAPTER XXIV

OF these last years Mr. Greenslet writes: "The end of the century and of the happy post-meridianal decade of Aldrich's life came together. Fate, that seldom fails to balance a man's account, was preparing to collect heavy arrears of sorrow. On Christmas Day, 1900, the elder of the twin sons was married." This marriage brought to Mr. Aldrich anticipations of great happiness — anticipations doomed to great disappointment. The acquaintance preceding the marriage was short, but the spirit in which Mr. Aldrich welcomed the engagement is well shown in the lines written under a photograph of the bride's little girl:

She became our grand-daughter
November 13, 1900.

Black shadows should have tolled the bells on this wedding day.

Mr. Greenslet has so graphically described the incidents of the next years that the following extracts are from his pen:

"In the early summer of 1901 the Aldriches sailed for England to spend some months on the Devon coast. On their return they were met at the wharf

by a message telling them that their married son, whose letter received just as they were sailing from Liverpool, announced his intention to welcome them at the pier, had been smitten with a sudden hemorrhage of the lungs and had been hurried to the Adirondacks. They hastened to his side, and for a time he seemed better. There amid the mountains for two years and a half the fight went on with alternate seasons of hope and sad certainty. Only Mr. Aldrich's intimates know how tragical was his grief in these cruel years. Before the world he contrived for the most part to maintain a brave cheerfulness, and through his correspondence runs a valiant humor that touches with poignant pathos the hearts of those who know what lay behind.

"The story of the earlier months at Saranac will best be told in his own words: 'We are very pleasantly settled, and like the quiet life here. We are on the edge of the village, with the mountains for our immediate neighbors. Our house, a new and spacious villa, stands on a plateau overlooking Saranac River. Two or three hundred yards away, at our feet, is the cottage in which Stevenson spent the winter of '87. The sunsets and the sunrises compensate one for the solitude which moreover has a charm of its own. . . . It snows nearly all the time in a sort of unconscious way — every window frame a picture of bewildering and capricious loveliness.

If our dear boy only continues to gather strength we shall have a happy winter in this little pocket Switzerland. He is very thin and white and feeble — at times I have to turn my eyes away, but my heart keeps looking at him.'

"As the year of 1903 drew to an end the hope that had from time to time lighted our poet's heart grew fainter. Writing to Mr. E. L. Burlingame, who had made him a flattering offer for some articles to be written, he had said — 'If anything should happen to my boy I'd never again set pen to paper. If the task were begun it would be left unfinished.' It was never even begun! The holidays came and went and the gentle life that was so dear to him flickered to its close.

"On March 6, 1904, Charles Frost Aldrich died. By this death, which involved more elements of tragedy than the mere pathos of mortality, the settled happiness of Aldrich's life was shattered. His literary faculty was shrivelled by it as by a touch of evil magic, and though he regained in time, to the superficial eye, something of the old airy joyousness, his intimates understood the brooding sorrow that lay underneath. Even in cheerier hours among his friends the old whimsical flow of happy life was poisoned at its source. Now and again his genial glow would come briefly back, but never with the old unquenchable fire; and often in the full current

of his talk he would fall suddenly silent and his face would be darkened by the shadow of his grief.

"The summer after Mr. Aldrich's son's death was spent at York Harbor. The familiar places of Ponkapog and 'The Crags' were too much crowded with ghosts and memories for readjustment from the old life to the new. Happily for Mr. Aldrich, he became interested in rewriting for Miss O'Neil his narrative poem of 'Judith and Holofernes,' changing it into the tragedy of 'Judith of Bethulîa.' The play was produced with success at the Tremont Theatre.

"The next summer was spent in cruising along the coast in his son's yacht, the Bethulîa; and in the winter Mr. Aldrich went to Egypt, where in Cairo a great happiness came to him, in the engagement of his surviving son. 'She is young — just twenty,' Aldrich wrote; 'I shall have lovely days with her. The marriage took place in June. All the Virtues attendant upon her pealed the wedding bells.'"

With this marriage the acute pain of the precedent years lessened somewhat — the broken square enclosed again. A daughter sat in the place of the absent son, with her youth and beauty giving back something of the cheer of happier days. With calm serenity the twisted cord of life was taken up — the summer drifted into winter, bringing with it its sudden blight of unutterable loss.

CHARLES FROST ALDRICH

IN THE UNIFORM OF THE FIRST CORPS OF CADETS, MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEER MILITIA

"Yet, O stricken heart, remember, O remember,
How of human days he lived the better part.
April came to bloom and never dim December
Breathed its killing chills upon his head or heart."

Mr. Aldrich died on March 19. Fittingly, as the sun set, the end came. With a smile of ineffable sweetness he said to the one dearest to him, "I am going to sleep; put out the lights." And for her he loved, the light of life went out and darkness came.

On the first day of spring, at the Arlington Street Church, were held impressive funeral services, "befitting a poet's passing."

Mrs. Gardner asked "that his pall might be the violet mantle she brought, nothing black should shroud his airy spirit in its flight."

"I wonder what day of the week,
I wonder what month of the year;
Will it be midnight or morning?
And who will bend over my bier?"

The friends he loved most "bent over his bier." And in the presence of many of his old comrades in the life of Letters he was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery beside his boy, on whose grave, as if held by him, rested the blanket of flowers that waited to cover the displaced brown earth. On the recumbent stone of granite and slate, underneath the carven wreath, is inscribed a fragment of Mr. Aldrich's own lines:

". . . How trivial now
To him must earthly laurel be
Who wears the amaranth on his brow!
How vain the voices of mortality!
. . . . . .
So take him, Earth, and this his mortal part
With that shrewd alchemy thou hast, transmute
To flower and leaf in thine unending Springs!"

FINIS

"That which in him was fair
Still shall be ours;
Yet, yet my heart lies there
Under the flowers."

THOMAS BAILEY
ALDRICH
DIED MARCH NINETEENTH
1907
So take him, Earth, and this his mortal part
With that shrewd alchemy thou hast transmute
To flowers and leaf in thine unending Springs

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